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RISTIAN LIVING

THE CHRISTIAN'S PERSONAL RELIGION

CLARENCE TUCKER CRAIG

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STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN LIVING

HENRY H. MEYER, Editor
WADE CRAWFORD BARCLAY, Associate Editor

THE CHRISTIAN'S PERSONAL RELIGION

An Elective Course for Young People

By

CLARENCE TUCKER CRAIG

Approved by the Committee on Curriculum
of the Board of Education of the
Methodist Episcopal Church

THE METHODIST BOOK CONCERN
NEW YORK · CINCINNATI

26-881

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Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No man hath beheld God at any time: if we love one another, God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us: hereby we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. (1 John 4. 7-13.)

I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains:
From whence shall my help come?
My help *cometh* from Jehovah,
Who made heaven and earth.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.
Behold, he that keepeth Israel
Will neither slumber nor sleep.
Jehovah is thy keeper:
Jehovah is thy shade upon thy right hand.
The sun shall not smite thee by day,
Nor the moon by night.
Jehovah will keep thee from all evil;
He will keep thy soul.
Jehovah will keep thy going out and thy coming in
From this time forth and for evermore. (Psa. 121.)

And it came to pass, as he was praying in a certain place, that when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Father, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And bring us not into temptation. (Luke 11. 1-4.)

CHAPTER I

COMMUNION WITH GOD

1. Are there any experiences of life in which individual temperament does not affect the personal expression? What effect has this on the unification of religious bodies?
2. Can the three degrees of communion described be ranked in comparative importance?
3. Of what value are books of devotion containing the communion of others with God in aiding my own fellowship with him?
4. To what extent is communion dependent upon a clear conception of God? Is the end of communion to make God better known to us?
5. What are the chief obstacles to a living trust in God?
6. Is prayer "an attitude of mind," or must definite times be set aside for it?
7. For what do you value communion with God? What are its benefits? Or is prayer a "waste of time"?

The heart of religion.—Religion, like every other word standing for a tremendous reality, overflows every definition which we may assign to it. Much religion to be found within the sphere of Christendom takes little or no account of God but is defined almost exclusively in terms of mutual helpfulness and belief in spiritual values. *The heart of true Christianity, however, is that communion which we have with God in fellowship with Jesus Christ.* Arguments for the existence of God may come afterward to uphold our faith, but reason in itself does not create reverence and worship. Ritual and creeds do not concern us in this study, for these are shells which may or may not contain a living faith. Communion with God is more than belief that there is a God. It establishes personal contact in the realm of the spirit.

Christian Experience Individual

Types of men.—It is impossible that only one particular type of religious experience should prevail, for each Christian is endowed with a personality distinctly his own. As

the expression of human friendships varies among different individuals, so should we expect it to be in our friendship with the one God. A recent psychologist has divided us into two main types: the introverts, who are introspectively inclined, and the extraverts, whose attention is dominated by things outside the person. These two types have many subdivisions. Religious experience has frequently been classified under the headings of the intensely ethical, the Pauline or "twice-born," and the mystical or contemplative types. But individuals generally defy classification. Each is his own type. It is impossible to say that one is a truer expression than another. An important commandment in communion with God is "To thine own self be true."

A personal possession.—There is one common characteristic, however: Genuine communion must take our religion out of the subjective or objective case and bring it truly into *the possessive case.* Religion must pass out of the realm of being a mere subject for debate or an object for reverence and become a reality that is possessed. "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob" must become "my God."

What Is Communion?

Appeal to analogy.—If Christian experience be so individual, no one description of communion will suffice. Better than any definition would be quotations from the autobiographies of a dozen representative men and women in whose lives God has been a reality. Before we proceed to such a study, it will be desirable to single out three kinds of communion which may be more or less definitely isolated. The analogies will be drawn from human friendship, which, after all, is our closest parallel to the divine friendship.

Sharing thought.—We say that we have communion with a friend when we exchange thought with that individual. Communion with God is likewise for some people a very definite experience of exchange of thought. Others cannot be conscious that God is speaking unto them. A monologue is not genuine communion. We must never forget that exchange of thought is never proof of the closeness

of communion. I can hold endless debate with a companion without ever agreeing with him in my conclusions.

Consciousness of presence.—A further degree of communion consists in consciousness of the presence of another. Without a word being uttered or a sound made it often happens that we are conscious of the presence of another in a room. It is a mark of real friendship when the imperative of conversation no longer exists, and we delight in the mere presence of the friend. Many have had that communion with God in nature which Wordsworth describes in the well-known lines:

> "And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime,
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man."[1]

Such an experience should not be undervalued, but it must be remembered that we can jostle in the crowd with someone whose heart we know not at all.

Community of purpose.—In some ways a less definite, in others a more important sense of communion is the sharing of a common purpose. He is an unusual person who has not at times been farther from his father when under the same roof than at other times when a thousand geographical miles may separate them. In one case there was misunderstanding and enmity; in the other, unity of purpose. The son or daughter might not know at a distance just where the father was or what he was thinking about at the moment, but he could be certain that they were united in a common purpose. The Johannine writings have been considered the most mystical in the entire New Testament, but the experience of communion there stressed is that of fellowship in a common purpose. "No man hath beheld God at any time: if we love one another, God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us. . . . He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." (1 John 4. 12, 8.)

[1] "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey," by William Wordsworth.

The Witness of Others

Thomas à Kempis.—That we may fully appreciate the scope of our communion with God, it would be well to consider some outstanding illustrations, not overlooking those which are furthest away from the personal experience of the average young person of to-day. The most popular Christian devotional classic has been Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ.* We can gain inspiration from even a fifteenth-century monk to obtain assurance of the certainty of God:

> And therefore, whatever thou bestowest upon me beside thyself, or whatever thou revealest or promisest concerning thyself, as long as I do not see or fully enjoy thee, is too little and fails to satisfy me. (III, 21.)
>
> Is it not thou, O Lord my God, whose mercies are without number? Where was it ever well with me absent from thee, or when could things go ill with me when thou wast present? I had rather be poor for thy sake than rich without thee. I choose rather to sojourn upon earth with thee than to possess heaven without thee. Where thou art there is heaven; and there is death and hell where thou art not. (III, 59.)

Tagore.—It is not strange that we have genuine expressions of communion with Him in whom "we live, and move, and have our being" from those who do not owe their allegiance to the Christian faith:

> "He it is, the innermost one, who awakens my being with his hidden touches.
>
> He it is who puts his enchantment upon these eyes and joyfully plays on the chords of my heart in varied cadence of pleasure and pain.
>
> He it is who weaves the web of this maya in evanescent hues of gold and silver, blue and green, and lets peep out from the folds his feet, at whose touch I forget myself.
>
> Days come and ages pass, and it is ever he who moves my heart in many a name, in many a guise, in many a rapture of joy and sorrow."[2]

A modern novelist.—One of the few present-day novelists with a spiritual appreciation has described a mystical experience of the hero in *Arnold Waterlow* in words so

[2] Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Company from *Gitangili*, by Rabindranath Tagore.

eloquent as to indicate that the like is not unknown to May Sinclair herself:

He saw the same hills, the same green fields, the same white river, but as if lifted to another level of reality, and shining with another light; light intensely still, intensely vibrating. They were no longer spread out in space and time, but they stood as if inside his mind, in another space and in another time; his mind held them and was inseparably one with them. At the same moment he had a sense, overpowering and irrefutable, of Reality, no longer hidden behind them, but apparent in them, the strange secret disclosed; Reality breaking through, shining through all the veils of sense; Reality present before him and in him, and stretching beyond him, out of time and out of space, as it was in eternity. God was here, made visible in the hills and the green fields and the white shining river. He was more aware of him, more certain of him than he was of his own existence, an intense awareness, an indestructible certainty.[3]

The God With Whom We Have Fellowship

Where is God?—This course does not consider religion as an intellectual problem. The arguments for the existence of God will pass entirely unnoticed, for we do not pray to a glorified watchmaker or a primeval first cause. But vital communion is difficult without some conception of "what and where is God?" Well do I remember a talk on astronomy in Sunday school in my boyhood days. The superintendent pictured Neptune billions of miles from the sun and indicated that our own solar system was only a tiny part of the whole. He seemed to suggest that there was one distant star around which all else revolved and left the impression that this was God. But if it took twenty-five thousand years for light from distant stars to reach us, there was not much use for even a youngster such as myself to pray in expectation that the answer might come in his lifetime. God is for many people a "great big blur." Inadequate conceptions of God have often blocked the way to true communion. Bojer, in *The Great Hunger,* has given us a vivid picture of such a failure of faith:

There was a time when I saw God standing with a rod in one hand and a sugar cake in the other—just punishment and rewards to all eternity. Then I thrust him from me

[3] Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Company from *Arnold Waterlow,* by May Sinclair.

because he seemed to me so unjust; and at last he vanished, melting into the solar systems on high, and all the infinitesimal growths here on the earth below. What was my life, what were my dreams, my joy or sorrow, to these? Where was I making for? Ever and always there was something in me saying, He is! But where? Somewhere beyond and behind the things you know—it is there he is. And so I determined to know more things, more, and more, and more—and what wiser was I? A steam hammer crushes my skull one day—and what has become of my part in progress and culture and science? Am I as much of an accident as a fly or an ant? Do I mean no more? Do I vanish and leave as little trace?[4]

Unsatisfactory answers.—How, then, shall we conceive of God? We can no longer think of him as a benevolent old man in the skies, rather unsuccessfully endeavoring to manage his world. Neither can we draw an equation between the world that now is, with all its misery, sin, and suffering, and the divine will and purpose. We can hardly escape the idea of certain limitations upon God, limitations inherent in the freedom given to men and in the dependable action which we call law. We must likewise reject the idea of a "future God"—the final product of the process of evolution. Such a conception has had its place as a reaction against a static, finished world. There can be no possible progress in that which "hath been, is now, and ever shall be, world without end." A coming kingdom of God has been the keynote of Christianity, but that demands a God whom we trust in absolute dependence at the beginning as well as at the end.

A spiritual being.—The best analogy to the person of God is our own personalities. My body is not I, though it is that through which I express myself. I, myself, am a spiritual being that no eye can see. My action is very limited, but God's activity suffers no such restrictions. God is where he acts; but that does not mean that he is diffused through space in minute particles. "God is a Spirit." Spirit cannot be identified with matter, but we become aware of God through his continuous activity in the world of nature and in our own hearts. That is the meaning of the Holy Spirit. He is the ever-present God,

[4] Taken from *The Great Hunger*, by Johan Bojer, by permission of the publishers, the Century Company.

who is spirit, and whose character has been revealed in Jesus Christ. We are continuously dependent on that God whether we are aware of it or not. He is not an absentee landlord of his universe, present only in "special providences" and answers to prayer. The Father of Jesus is a continuous Worker (John 5. 17) and the world's greatest Burden Bearer.

A living faith.—To believe in God is to believe that the heart of the world is spiritual. It is to believe that when I am upholding moral and spiritual values I am working in harmony with the deepest principles of the universe. To trust God will not always protect me from disappointment and failure and pain. To trust God is to walk by faith in the high ideals he has implanted within us and revealed unto us in his prophetic messengers. To believe in God is to believe, not that these ideals are simply the pious daydreams of impractical visionaries, but that they can and must be wrought into the fabric of our life. God is not a moving stairway that lifts us to this higher plane; he is the reservoir of power which we may utilize in the pursuance of our daring faith.

Prayer, the Heart of Communion

More than petition.—Prayer is the heart of communion, and communion the heart of prayer. This does not mean to exclude thanksgiving or confession or intercession or petition. The low plane upon which the religious experience of most people rests, however, is revealed in the fact that prayer to them is almost synonymous with petition. They deserve the rebuke that Luther pronounced upon those who worshiped saints: "We honor them and call upon them only when we have a pain in our legs or our heads, or when our pockets are empty." Prayer is not an easy way of getting things or a painful duty to be performed; it should mean the gracious privilege of fellowship with God. This is truly prayer without ceasing—the permanent direction of the soul to God (1 Thess. 5. 17).

Strength for the soul.—A "daily dozen" has become a byword to describe the urban resident's effort for physical fitness. But at best the body will decay in seventy or

eighty or ninety years. It is of the dust and to the dust will it return, no matter what we do with it. But the soul of man is a thing of eternity. We need a "daily dozen" for the soul, whereby in persistent prayer, in setting our minds on the things that are above, we may have fellowship with the Spirit divine. Religion is the food for our inner life (Deut. 8. 3).

Fellowship.—Prayer is more than an exercise to strengthen our spiritual muscles. It is more than merely holding before our minds a new thought or, more usually, an old thought. Prayer is not pulling ourselves up by our own bootstraps; it is reaching out for the hand of God. Its essence is fellowship.

Waiting upon God.—It is always amusing to witness a crowd of American tourists being rushed through the Louvre in Paris, not bent upon enjoying the beauties before them but intent on "missing nothing" they should report to their friends. What a contrast to the genuine lover of art, sitting for days before the Sistine Madonna in the room in Dresden devoted to that one masterpiece of Raphael, looking into the face of the Christ Child. Some pray like the tourist; others hold fellowship with God like the speechless group before the Raphael Madonna. Christ complained of his disciples, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" He needed human fellowship; because of our need for divine fellowship God says unto us, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" (Matt. 26. 40.) For

> "Lord, what a change within us one short hour
> Spent in thy presence will avail to make!
> . . . . . .
> We kneel, how weak! we rise, how full of power!
> Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
> Or others, that we are not always strong,
> That we are overborne with care,
> That we should ever weak or heartless be,
> Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,
> And joy and strength and courage are with thee."[5]

For we "ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18. 1).

[5] "Prayer," by Richard C. Trench.

The Fruit of Communion

A sense of the holy.—Religion is its own justification. It may bring moral and economic benefits, and true religion does; but these are in a measure stepchildren, and Wisdom is first of all justified by her own children. Communion with God brings first of all *illumination, a sense of the holy.* Beyond that which is useful or profitable religion knows that which is holy. Life has its sanctities, before which we can simply bow in awe and reverence. The person who has lost the sense of the holy has lost much of the wonder and the charm of the universe.

Power.—Communion with God means power. "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4. 13). We are dependent on God despite ourselves. It is faith in God which moves mountains and which constitutes our power. "The fish doubts the existence of sea water until he is caught. So we of God."[6] Faith is the conscious utilization of the power on which we are always dependent.

Peace.—Communion with God likewise means *peace.* Let anyone express his faith through such words as Psa. 121:

> "I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains:
> From whence shall my help come?
> My help *cometh* from Jehovah,
> Who made heaven and earth.
>
> He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:
> He that keepeth thee will not slumber."

Such trust is the road to the only peace that passeth all understanding because it is a peace that does not first come after the battle is over but undergirds us in the midst of soul conflict.

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[6] *Letters and Religion,* by J. J. Chapman, page 130. Atlantic Monthly Press, 1924.

I think myself happy, king Agrippa, that I am to make my defence before thee this day touching all the things whereof I am accused by the Jews: especially because thou art expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently. My manner of life then from my youth up, which was from the beginning among mine own nation and at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; having knowledge of me from the first, if they be willing to testify, that after the straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand *here* to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, earnestly serving *God* night and day, hope to attain. And concerning this hope I am accused by the Jews, O king! Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead? I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this I also did in Jerusalem: and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death I gave my vote against them. And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities. Whereupon as I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, at midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them that journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice saying unto me in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the goad. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me. (Acts 26. 2-18.)

Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire. . . . Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. (Matt. 5. 21, 22, 27, 28.)

CHAPTER II

CONSCIENCE

1. If conscience is a "voice of hope," why do we so frequently dislike its mandates?
2. Considering the conflicting testimony of various consciences, can we say that there is an eternal right and wrong?
3. How should we judge a person who does a socially harmful act with good conscience?
4. Consider two or three practices you now follow which you once condemned. In which cases has your conscience become dulled? In which is the change due to truer moral insight?
5. Can conscience have the same authority when we become aware of the influence of our education in forming its mandates?
6. What is to be done when our own consciences apparently conflict with a word of Jesus?
7. Why do young people resent an appeal to their sense of obligation?

A sense of obligation.—Conscience is a sense of obligation. It affirms, "We have done that which it was our duty to do." It is a "law in our inward parts, which is written in our hearts." The irreducible voice of conscience is "I ought." It is something very different from the conclusion, after an examination of all possible consequences, that "it is prudent for me to follow this course of action." It is something else than merely bowing in fatalistic resignation beneath the yoke of "I must." The compulsion of conscience consists presumably not in outward society nor in force of circumstances but in an inward sense of duty.

The Imperative of Conscience

The trumpeter of morality.—True science always speaks in interrogative sentences. It must ever ask questions, for every answer brings with it a new question. History speaks in declarative sentences, for that which hath been can never be changed. Its tale can only be recounted. Art speaks in exclamatory sentences. It is satisfied to

stop and wonder, to behold and enjoy. But morality always speaks in imperative sentences, and its trumpeter is conscience. It proclaims the eternal authority of what ought to be. It lays its disturbing hand upon my wayward impulses and asserts the supremacy of my better self.

Its unpopularity.—Conscience has poor standing in many circles to-day. Not only are "obligation" and "duty" unpopular words: their authority is suspected by "the new freedom." We cannot take the imperative of conscience for granted without examination.

Moral conflict.—The indisputable basic fact of conscience is the presence of moral conflict within every individual. Paul called it the lusting of the flesh against the spirit. We may prefer to speak of the clash between immediate, petty aims, and loftier, worthier goals. We are told to-day that our instincts need to be sublimated, that our native impulses need to be redirected into the most fruitful channels. Into this conflict there comes a voice of despair which oppresses us with a sense of failure; but likewise there comes a voice of hope. So long as there are promptings of a higher ideal within, degradation is never complete. Improvement is always possible so long as the spur of conscience drives the flagging moral sense of men. It may be discouraging to think what I ought to be; but so long as I appreciate that sense of obligation, it is the most hopeful thing in my life.

The Conflict of Conscience

Paul's experience.—Complexity arises when we become more fully aware of the conflict of conscience. One of the best illustrations is to be found in the life of Paul. He recounts before King Agrippa the story of his Jewish education and strict training, of the rise of the sect of the Nazarenes who followed Jesus. In obedience to the dictates of his strict Jewish conscience he shut up many in prison, voted with others to kill them, sought evidence against them in every possible way, and even persecuted them in foreign cities. All these things he did not only with a perfectly good conscience but at the behest of conscience, with the inward conviction "I ought." Then there came a change in his life. Thereafter Paul's con-

science drove him not to persecute the Christians but to be their leading apostle, antagonizing his former Jewish friends and working to build up a new Israel of God. This also was at the behest of consicence with the inner conviction "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. 9. 16). At no time was Paul in doubt as to the imperative of his conscience. His mistake was concerning what he thought about what he ought to do. He *ought* "to do many things." Concerning that he had no doubt. *But what he thought about what he ought* was another matter. Here Paul made a complete change, for his personal judgment was quite fallible.

The influence of custom.—So long as one stays in the same place in time and space, such conflict may not be so apparent; but the minute we study the history of moral ideas or travel widely we come face to face with these divergences. Individual conscience on such matters as the personal relation of the sexes, property rights, and Sabbath observance varies greatly. Skepticism quite naturally arises as to whether conscience is anything more than a reflex of custom, and whether its mandates have any more authority than the changing manners of men.

Varying standards.—Plato thought that weak children ought to be exposed, and not allowed to live. The devout Puritan Fathers who founded Harvard College for the purpose of educating ministers of the gospel paid for the first two buildings out of the proceeds of a lottery. Less than a hundred years ago a group of students were expelled from a theological school for expressing antislavery sentiments. To-day there are many zealous patriots who have thought that they ought to persecute all public speakers who according to their definition are radicals. Conscience has motivated other sincere people to work for State laws forbidding the teaching of evolution in the schools. One group is told by conscience, "I ought not to drink intoxicating liquors under any circumstances." Another group is convinced, "I am a most careless host if I fail to provide for the exhilarating refreshment of my guests."

Moral skepticism.—Little wonder that Pascal, who was himself a most devout person, burst into this expression of ethical skepticism: "There is hardly an idea of justice

or injustice which does not change with the climate. Three degrees of latitude reverse all jurisprudence. The meridian decides the truth. Right has its epochs. The entrance of Saturn into the sign of the lion marks the origin of a certain crime. Wonderful justice which is bounded by a river!"

The voice of God.—Conscience has not infrequently been called the voice of God; but how can this babel of conflicting imperatives be the voice of Him who is eternal truth and goodness? Even with the individual it seems more like the oracle at Delphi, whose messages were ambiguous and uncertain. When steering our life by our conscience we have thought we have been steering it by a compass fixed upon the pole of true virtue. But if the consciences of men sound such an uncertain trumpet, can it be more than the twinkling stars of the heavens by which we guide the vessel of our lives? If the imperative of conscience is filled with such varied and conflicting contents, can we do otherwise than surrender to the paralyzing moral doctrine "It is right to him who thinketh it right"?

The Peril of a Good Conscience

Clear conscience not enough.—One thing is certain concerning the problem presented by the conflict of conscience, and that is *the peril of a good conscience.* Of course, it does not follow that a bad conscience is preferable; rather would we indorse the sentiment "A good conscience is an invention of the devil." If we are to believe his story to King Agrippa, Paul had a perfectly good conscience when he was breathing out hate and persecuting the Christians even unto Damascus. If a clear conscience were all that were necessary to make right action, we are not justified in criticizing Paul. We may go further and say that the greatest wrongs of history have been committed by men acting in perfectly good conscience. The typical villain of melodrama is a very unreal character. The tragedy of the evils of humanity is this—not that they are committed in a spirit of perverseness but that they are committed by men following zealously the dictates of their conscience. The men who burned witches and promoted the Inquisition were not disobeying conscience; they were striving after

a good conscience, and thereby have secured an evil name in history.

Can we see the good?—The commonest defense one hears of so-called questionable amusements is: "I can't see any wrong in doing that. I can do it with a perfectly good conscience." That doubtless is true. It may be that such a person cannot see anything wrong with the course, but something may be the matter with his eyes. During the disorders of the period of the judges in Hebrew history we read that "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." But they had poor eyes to see moral evil. If right and wrong depend exclusively on the several consciences of millions of people, we are given over to a moral anarchy that is appalling. "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!" (Matt. 6. 23.)

Dulling the edge.—Moral judgments may be revised both upward and downward. A conscience once quick to perceive evil may be so deadened by familiar contact therewith that it loses its old keenness of moral perception.

> "Vice is a monster of so frightful mien
> As to be hated needs but to be seen;
> Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
> We first endure, then pity, then embrace."[1]

Never were those words truer than in these days when the veneration of tolerance leads countless young people to be overtolerant with their own sin.

Intent and result.—Right and wrong, it is true, depend on the inner motivation of the individual. No consequences can make an act good if the heart that prompts it is evil. But right and wrong are likewise dependent on social values. The ultimate justification for having a good conscience is that the consequences of our action have been fruitful and helpful. Of course, no one can stop to count results. We need ready-made moral convictions—a triggerlike conscience in reaching moral judgments. But these judgments cannot depend on some mystic intuition of God's will, as we have seen from the conflicting standards of men, but must find their ultimate justification in

[1] *Essay on Man*, Pope.

human welfare. The validity of your conscience on such a subject as alcoholic beverages, for instance, is not settled in the realm of abstract "ought." A "good conscience" in a person who had been offered wine or beer at the table since childhood will be very different from that of one who had been taught that to taste wine is a sin. The right and wrong must find their ultimate justification in the social consequences that follow action. The greatest barrier to moral progress may well be the good conscience of the person who "thought that he ought to do many things" which were as a matter of fact socially harmful.

Knowing the right.—Our hesitancy to criticize a "good conscience" is doubtless due to linking the question of moral guilt exclusively with the thought of "getting to heaven." Ignorance of the right has not seemed a fair ground on which to keep men out of paradise. Men can at best live up to the light which they possess; but the fact is that ignorance of the right *is* continually keeping men out of paradise. The unwitting sins that have their evil consequences even when done with good intent *do* keep us from a better day. Without more knowledge and truer knowledge to guide our sense of obligation there can be no coming kingdom of God.

The Education of Conscience

Disobedience no solution.—There is no solution of the moral problem of the individual along the line of disobedience to conscience. It is of no benefit that men should become traitors to their inner sense of obligation. That cuts down the only rope by which we can climb. If loyalty to duty is undermined, there is no foundation upon which character can be built. Conscience must be our guide, else we commit moral suicide. We dare not tamper with the imperative "I ought," but there must be education for "what I think about what I ought." As Ruskin said, "Obey thy conscience, but first be sure that it is not the conscience of an ass."

Conscience is educable.—As a matter of fact conscience is continually being subjected to an educational process. The only question concerns what shall constitute the molding forces. Anyone who has read German books on ethics

written during the period from 1870 to 1914 will be conscious how, amid fine perception of ethical theory, on the subject of war the military education of the nation had had its inevitable influence. Consider the list of duties of a Snataka, a twice-born Hindu, who has finished his studentship and has acquired an educated conscience according to the law of his people: "Let him not step over a stretched rope to which a calf is tied; let him not dine together with his wife; else his children will be destitute of manly vigor; let him not ascend a tree; let him not descend into a well; let him not blow the fire with his mouth; let him not set out on a journey when the sun stands over the trees." There is abundant testimony that a holy man can acquire such a conscience that violation of any of these precepts will cause him deep inward travail of spirit.

What educator?—There are many different forces contending for the opportunity of giving content to our conscience. There are the traditions and customs of society in which we live. There is the flood of "sewer literature" which fills our newsstands and extends its subtly demoralizing influence. There are prophetic voices who think they are conscious of undiscovered sins, and from whose creative spirits there should arise fresh interpretations of goodness.

"Christ or conscience?"—We as Christians recognize the unique moral supremacy of Jesus Christ. We may say with Paul, Though there are many lords, yet for us there is one Lord, Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 8. 5, 6). But even Christ cannot be a substitute for my own conscience. I cannot absolve myself from responsibility for my actions by sheltering under any authority. "Let Christ be your guide!" is not an alternative that we can place over against "Let conscience be your guide!" No man, according to this very authority, can serve two masters. It is as true of Christ *and* conscience as of God and Mammon. To obey Christ is to bow beneath the external authority of a historical character and a present spiritual fact; but to obey conscience is to accept the autonomy of the free spirit of man.

An authoritative Guide.—Christ cannot have his rightful supremacy as a competing alternative to conscience;

his authority consists in his place as the Educator and Inspirer of conscience. He is the Guide we choose to find our duty to our fellow men because he is the most authoritative Interpreter we know of God's will and way for men. He does not absolve us from the profoundest thinking on the problems of life; but our aim is to be able to say, "We have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2. 16). Conscience does not seek neighbors but authorities, and He is the moral authority in whose school we would learn.

The Inspirer of conscience.—But Jesus is more than the schoolmaster of conscience: he is the Inspirer of our flagging moral spirits. As Paul said unto Timothy, "Remember Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2. 8). As George Tyrrell says in *Christianity at the Crossroads,* "Whenever I am tempted to give up the struggle I catch a glimpse of that strange Man hanging on Calvary and go back once more to my task."

Revising moral standards.—The authority of Jesus is supreme not only in the content of our moral duty but in our whole attitude toward accepted moral standards. The most noteworthy fact in his ethical teaching was the daring with which he set over his own moral insight as opposed to the current rabbinical interpretation of the law. (See Matt. 5. 21-48.) He drew new and far-reaching implications from the accepted law of Moses. These implications in many cases went so far as to abrogate the original law. The lofty idealism and supreme innerness of the Sermon on the Mount have been alike the glory and the despair of sincere Christians. But it is a mistake to look upon Jesus as a second and more authoritative lawgiver, erecting an impossibly high standard of conduct for his followers; he is rather our Guide in the eternal process whereby the conventional standards of living of each age are brought under the criticism of the man with keener insight into the good life.

Awareness of evil.—Christianity does not create my duty, but Jesus helps me find it. We are often disappointed in the redemptive product of Christianity. It seems an exaggeration to say with Paul that the Christian is a new moral creation; but what we see down the years of the history of the Christian Church is an ever-present

educator of the consciences of men whenever they have taken Jesus seriously. They cannot know him without being more sensitive to human welfare and without being more aware of impurity, dishonesty, and callous heartlessness.

And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel. . . . Wherefore hast thou despised the word of Jehovah, to do that which is evil in his sight? thou hast smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. . . . And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against Jehovah. And Nathan said unto David, Jehovah also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. (2 Sam. 12. 7, 9, 13.)

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1. 8, 9.)

Then came Peter and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, who would make a reckoning with his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, that owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not *wherewith* to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, who owed him a hundred shillings: and he laid hold on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest. So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him unto him, and saith to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me: shouldest not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due. So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts. (Matt. 18. 21-35.)

CHAPTER III

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

1. Are most confessions admissions of an act rather than of the wrong in the act?
2. In everyday life do you experience any difficulty in determining that which is sinful?
3. Distinguish sin from crime and evil.
4. Can you name a single act that is always wrong? What application has this to the definition of sin in the text?
5. Has Christ made forgiveness more accessible to you personally? How?
6. In what sense can it be said that God's forgiveness is conditional?
7. Is open confession of a sin to someone necessary for peace of mind?
8. Do you believe that the Protestant Church should institute a voluntary confessional?

On Communion Sunday, Christians unite in the general confession: "We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, which we from time to time most grievously have committed. . . ." Genuine confession, however, has receded into the background in the religious experience of most Christians. It comes to them as a surprise to learn that in the early Christian church sins were openly confessed to the whole congregation. (James 5. 16; Matt. 18. 17.) Protestants have no desire to wail the penitential psalms. They resent the intrusion, as they feel, of the Roman Catholic Church into the private affairs of men through the secret confessional and absolution. They feel that Protestantism excludes all saving power in mere penitential discipline.

The Necessity of Confession

An emphasis in psychology.—It is not in religious circles but in psychology that the greatest emphasis is laid to-day upon confession. Psychology makes much of hidden and repressed desires, which disturb the mind unless brought to the surface in open confession. There is a

growing number of practitioners who treat disease by "mental cross-examination." The presupposition is that it is impossible for the individual to have peace of mind or health of body until this secret burden, of which he may not himself be fully conscious, is unloaded.

Conviction of sin.—Religion should likewise insist upon the necessity for some form of confession. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1. 8, 9.) Confession is necessary because there is no victory over a sin of which we are not conscious. The old Methodist phrase "conviction of sin" stood for a vital truth. I must stand convicted in the court of my own mind before any salvation is possible. That personal conviction is naturally a confession of guilt. The "true confessions" in which some magazines specialize lay bare lurid personal history but not penitent souls.

Atonement.—Confession is essential because forgiveness is more than a mere passing over of sin on the part of God. It is restoration to fellowship. This defines to whom our confession should be addressed: it should be to the one with whom the fellowship has been severed by our wrongdoing. Confession will be unto God, for sin always mars the fellowship with him, but it must likewise often be to our fellow men against whom we have sinned. There will also be a place for confession to a minister or a trusted friend of those wrongs which have been against no one in particular but which keep peace from the heart.

What Is Sin?

Identification, not definition.—The most important question relative to confession and forgiveness concerns the nature of sin. We are not interested in a theological *definition* of sin; the practical *identification* of that which is sinful in our own lives is of far greater importance. We have seen in the study of conscience in the preceding chapter how difficult it is to distinguish between mere social customs and permanent moral principles. The law of the State and the nation defines crimes, but sin admits of no such authoritative determination. "The sin of Jeroboam"

is a phrase that is met with frequently in the historical books of the Old Testament (2 Kings 13. 2). The significant thing about the sin of Jeroboam is that it consisted in something he did not regard as sinful, nor did most of the men of his time. It was "that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah" but not in the eyes of his contemporaries. Sin must be redefined and rediscovered in the light of each new day.

Disobedience.—The Greek word "to sin" means literally *"to miss the mark."* But that raises the further question as to what the mark may be toward which we should aim. Sin is sometimes defined as *disobedience* to the laws of God. But where are God's laws to be found? Though the Decalogue, as given in Exodus and Deuteronomy, contains much that is undoubtedly divine will, new laws of God are being discovered by scientists and prophets. God's laws are not the taboos of an arbitrary Deity but are the expression of that which is harmful to the full development of life. Of the sins proscribed in the Decalogue only the first three injunctions—those against polytheism, idolatry, and profanity—may with any plausibility be called sins against God alone. Jesus definitely transferred the Sabbath command from regard for a divine decree to concern for human need. The sinfulness of most acts is revealed in our human relationships. One needs only a perception of moral values to know that the heading of the fifty-first psalm is a late guess. After David had wronged two human lives as cruelly and horribly as he had Uriah and Bath-sheba, it would have been pious mockery for him to have prayed unto God, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned" (Psa. 51. 4). God's laws must be discovered in the social world of which we are a part.

Ignorance.—Sin is sometimes laid at the door of *ignorance;* but if knowledge is not virtue, neither can sin be simply ignorance. To know the right and to do the right are two quite different things. The Golden Rule must have intelligence in its application. Conduct can never dispense with right knowledge but it never stops there, for action roots in the will.

Selfishness.—Sin is frequently charged to the account of *selfishness.* Certainly most of the woes of mankind would

be eliminated if this could be rooted out, and the man who is not saved from selfishness is not saved at all. Dostoevsky in *The Brothers Karamzov* recounts a Russian legend illustrating the inherently selfish character of sin. A noblewoman who had lived only for her own personal gratification died and passed on to the next world. No deeds of kindness could be pleaded in her behalf before the court of eternal justice. Finally it was recalled that she had once given an onion to an old beggar woman. It was decreed, therefore, that if she could be pulled out of the pit of hell by holding on to the onion, her soul could be saved. For a moment it appeared as if she would succeed; but when she discovered that others were holding on to her limbs in order to be saved with her, she struggled so violently to free herself, fearing that the onion would not be strong enough for more than herself, that she lost her grip and fell back.

Social sins.—The selfish sins of to-day are most devastating in our organized social and industrial life. The most dangerous sinner is not the wife-beater, the hold-up man, nor the blackmailer. "We sin by syndicate." No pickpocket can possibly loot from the public as much as can a street-car corporation or gas company or trust with watered stock upon which dividends must be earned. The holders of stock may be eminently respectable persons. Distance disinfects dividends, and it requires social imagination to perceive the effects of selfish acquisitiveness. We know what to do with the violators of accepted taboos; but so long as the code of private morality is not broken, society has not learned to brand these sinners and demand confession from them.

Sensuality.—Sin is frequently thought of as *sensuality*. That does describe many of the grosser sins; but Jesus does not lay the root of sin in the body, which we share with all of brute creation, but in the responsible mind that is peculiar to man. Sin is in the heart. Sin lies not in a sexual act but in a lustful heart. The sin of murder begins with hate. If sin is falling short of the glory of God it must lie in the self-consciousness that man shares with God.

Misdirected impulses.—Though all these conceptions

assist us, none of them afford an adequate definition of sin. Much sin may be selfishness, but selfishness is simply an exaggerated misdirection of that which is good. A world stripped of all ambition would be an intolerable paradise of competents. Some sin may be sensuality, yet our senses have their normal, natural place. Sin is not any one evil thing but is *a wrong use of that which may be good.* Psychology is teaching us that almost all activity roots in our instincts. For instance, lying is one's response to the instinct for self-preservation. We may be agreed that lying is sinful, but without the instinct of self-preservation the race would soon pass away. Sin is the wrong use of our native, original endowment.

"Original" sin.—"The fall of man" and "original sin" may be phrases foreign to our day, but interpreted in the light of this conception of human nature they take on new meaning. Sin may not be "original" with us in that we are the first to perform it, but it is "original" in that it roots in our own instinctive nature. To blame sin on the devil or on Adam and Eve is to dodge the fact of our own origination. That we are not very original in our sins does not alter our responsibility.

Moralized religion.—Sin is then an antisocial expression of that which is in itself nonmoral. As we saw in the last chapter it must be judged from two aspects—the inner motivation and the outward results. No simple catalogue of taboos will suffice for our guidance. A confession of sin involves a consciousness of wrong motives and unsocial conduct. Not only does this mean the realization of many new sins, but it may likewise call for a revision of judgment and a changed perception of values. Jesus sought to show men that sin could not possibly consist in the failure to keep prescribed fasts nor in eating an egg laid on the Sabbath day. It could not be a matter of unclean foods or eating from ceremonially unwashed bowls. We laugh at such examples but often without realizing that many good people to-day are as unenlightened in their stress upon certain ethical taboos as the Pharisees of old. Micah asked, "What doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk walk humbly with thy God?" But confession for some

people concerns primarily petty things that do not remotely come under such a vital, social conception of religion.

The Grounds of Forgiveness

The great incentive.—If consciousness of sin is the background of confession, the promise of forgiveness is the magnetic incentive to contrite repentance. Repentance is more than sorrow for sin: it is a repudiation of wrongdoing and a turning toward the light. Christianity began with the proclamation "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4. 17). There could be no stronger motivation for repentance than the coming of a new day when God's will should be done. For every individual there is a ground for repentance in the willingness of God to forgive.

The difficulty of forgiveness.—We are not interested, in this connection, in all the theories that have been evolved in the history of the Christian Church to explain the possibility of God's forgiving grace. Not only do they root in a literalizing of the graphic metaphors with which Paul describes the experience of the Christian in fellowship with Christ: they likewise bear testimony to the consciousness of the Christian mind that forgiveness always presents a difficult problem in a moral world. We may well ask: How can the record be deleted? How can the habits of a man's life be changed by any process of cancellation? How is forgiveness possible when the results of sin are never confined within the walls of our own selves?

Redemption in Christ.—So long as forgiveness is viewed as an intellectual problem it will never be solved. Social workers are not interested so much in the forgiveness of sin as in the removal of the causes and effects of sin. But religion must bring some word to the individual heart. The glory of Christianity is that it brings a certainty of forgiveness to the repentant sinner. Jesus brought that certainty wherever he went. It was the realization of the apostolic church that "if any man is in Christ, *he is* a new creature" (2 Cor. 5. 17). This did not consist in any pious fiction that pronounced a guilty man innocent. Forgiveness was possible "in Christ" because that man was

no longer on the wrong road but on the right one. God actually "delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love" (Col. 1. 13). Forgiveness involved more than merely passing over wrongdoing: it meant restoring the individual to fellowship with God and with his fellow men. That called for the gradual transformation of the life. We sing, "He breaks the power of canceled sin." Forgiveness does more than cancel the sin: it must break its power in our life.

God's own work.—We have paid no attention to the theories of atonement which should explain how forgiveness could be possible. Some of them have blasphemed God in assuming an unwillingness on his part. Much popular Christianity has tacitly assumed that unless Jesus had paid some necessary price, forgiveness would be thwarted. The message of the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15. 11-24), better called the parable of the forgiving father, has been forgotten. It has been overlooked that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5. 19).

An illustration by Jesus.—The most striking example of the unmerited grace of God is afforded by the parable Jesus gave of the unfortunate servant (Matt. 18. 21-35). The exaggeration of figures merely illustrates the impossibility of translating the gospel from the language of love to the language of business. No business man would think of lending ten million dollars without security, nor would he cancel such an obligation simply because the impecunious debtor fell on his knees and prayed for mercy. Nothing could so graphically present God's readiness to forgive. We realize what Shakespeare would teach through Portia in *The Merchant of Venice:*

> **"Earthly power doth then show likest God's**
> **When mercy seasons justice."**

"I Believe in the Forgiveness of Sins"

Double-edged words.—One of the articles of the Apostles' Creed affirms belief in the forgiveness of sins. That is a comforting faith which finds its justification in trust

in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; but the words are double-edged. They should mean "I believe in forgiving sins in others" fully as much as "I believe that my own sins are forgiven." The only clause in the Lord's Prayer which contains an apparent condition is the prayer for forgiveness: "Forgive us our trespasses, *as* we forgive those who trespass against us."

> **"We do pray for mercy;**
> **And that same prayer doth teach us all to render**
> **The deeds of mercy."**

It is not always comforting to think that our own sins are forgiven just to the extent that we stand ready to forgive others. The one barrier to God's mercy is the unforgiving spirit.

A forgiving spirit.—Jesus emphasizes this in the parable referred to above. The story does not infer that God's forgiveness is retracted. The temporal element must be excluded from the interpretation of the parable. But God knows there is no genuine repentance in the heart of the man who rises from his knees to exercise harsh judgment upon his neighbor. If men find it difficult to believe in a forgiving God, it may be because they meet so few who measure up to this criterion of having experienced divine mercy. In Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables,* Jean Valjean leaves his prison walls only to find men hostile and suspicious. When men learn that he is a former convict, he is refused food, work, and kindness. Late at night, having tramped all day, been thrown out of two inns, he knocks at a cottage door where there is still a light. When the cottager opens, he asks for food and lodging. The cottager looks at him intently, then exclaims, "Are you the man?" and reaches for his gun.

"For pity's sake, a drop of water," pleads Jean.

"Rather a gunshot," replies the cottager.

That night hope died in his breast. He turned to crime again. He developed murder in his heart. It was only when the good Bishop of D— forgave him and insisted on believing in him that hope, faith, and goodness were reborn in the soul of Jean Valjean. We do not have our citizenship papers in the kingdom of grace until we can manifest

our repentance through a forgiving spirit toward others. A more joyous note was never played upon the harp of life than this overtone of forgiveness; but a more solemn warning was never uttered than in the words "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6. 15). Men believed in a forgiving God when Jesus said, "Thy sins are forgiven" (Mark 2. 5); when from the cross he cried, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23. 34). Then the word of forgiveness became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld its glory—glory that was of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

And as he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. (John 9. 1-4.)

And straightway, when they were come out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever; and straightway they tell him of her: and he came and took her by the hand, and raised her up; and the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were sick, and them that were possessed with demons. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick with divers diseases, and cast out many demons; and he suffered not the demons to speak, because they knew him. (Mark 1. 29-34.)

And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch. Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for *my* power is made perfect in weakness. (2 Cor. 12. 7-9.)

And they come to Jericho: and as he went out from Jericho, with his disciples and a great multitude, the son of Timæus, Bartimæus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the way side. And when he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And many rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried out the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and said, Call ye him. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good cheer: rise, he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, sprang up, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered him, and said, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? And the blind man said unto him, Rabboni, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And straightway he received his sight, and followed him in the way. (Mark 10. 46-52.)

CHAPTER IV

FAITH AND HEALTH

1. How is the scientific investigator of the causes of disease a religious worker?
2. Has the state a right to set up requirements for all practitioners of healing?
3. If "miracles of healing" are to be looked upon as evidence of supernatural power, what is to be said concerning mental healing throughout history?
4. Give illustrations from experience of the power of faith in health. To what extent is the object of that faith important?
5. How would you distinguish between "a gospel for health" and "a gospel of health"?
6. What is the legitimate place of prayer in case of sickness.
7. Does religion actually promote temperate, rational living, or unhealthy emotional excitement?
8. Has religion frequently been destructive of health? If so, is this justifiable?

Personal and social.—Personal religion can never be discussed in complete separation from its social aspects, for religion is both an individual and collective matter. Likewise, while health is the most personal concern which can be imagined, the health of the individual depends on the surroundings in which he lives as well as the mode of life which he himself follows. This twofold aspect of health must be kept in mind as we review some of the connections with religion which have sometimes been maintained. That a close interrelation has been assumed appears from the custom of speech which refers to the doctor ministering to the health of the body and the minister to the welfare of the soul.

No dualism.—Such dualism, however, appears more and more untenable. Each individual is a body-soul, a unitary being, which develops as a whole. Religion is of concern to the doctor because the state of the mind has its effect on the body, and health is of most vital concern to

the "shepherd of souls" because the condition of health can vitally affect both faith and conduct.

The Cause of Disease

These introductory observations should serve as a background for the consideration of one or two theories as to the origin of sickness which concern our theme.

Not a visitation from God.—Many devout souls have looked upon bodily ills as a punishment from God. Throughout the Psalms we find wailings of stricken men who ascribed their extremity to unwitting sins. The origin of many diseases was ascribed to demonic visitation in the popular conception at the time of Christ. Even to-day many devout people, particularly in prayers, speak of sickness in terms of "divine Providence" and the "inscrutable will of God," as if God deliberately willed cases of smallpox and typhoid fever and cancer.

Good news for the sick.—Jesus brought good news to the sick when he repudiated once and for all the doctrine that sickness was necessarily the result of sin. In the ninth chapter of John we read the account of a man who had been born blind who came to Jesus to be healed. The disciples, steeped in the ideas of their time, naturally asked, "Who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" Jesus denied the existence of such a dilemma. He refused to enter the field of speculation but saw in the unfortunate man only an opportunity to help. We know that congenital blindness is frequently caused by parental sin. Our lives are so related that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children. A man's own sin can ruin his health. What Jesus intended to deny, however, was not *the social consequences of sin* but the idea that a vindictive God stands over us deliberately to punish with sickness the man who sins. The consequences of our own choices must not be laid at the door of the Almighty. Neither should the working out of natural phenomena be the occasion for blaspheming the name of God.

Not the illusion of mortal mind.—It would seem unnecessary to refute such a proposition except that certain theorists of our day have used the Christian name to cover

such an idea. If words are common symbols for ideas, if we can trust a text to mean what it says, then Jesus believed that he healed men and women suffering from actual ailments. There is not a word in his good news to indicate that their indisposition was simply an error of their mortal minds. That may have been the great discovery of the nineteenth century, but Jesus nowhere even by implication hints at it. Sickness to Jesus was a devastating reality among men. As we witness in him the concern for the sick we see that "unpleasant things cannot be thought out; they must be fought out and dug out and lived out." He who was made perfect through suffering and bore the pain of a cruel crucifixion is our best refutation of the theory. We would add further the words of L. P. Jacks: "I would rather live in a world which contained real evils which all men recognize than in another where all men were such imbeciles as to believe in the existence of evil which has no existence at all."[1] Functional and organic diseases, however, are not fictions of a diseased imagination but results of a disordered bodily condition, which must be treated through the body itself.

Varied causes.—It is superfluous to make any detailed medical examination of the causes of diseases. We can content ourselves with the general statement that disease is a sign of some disorder of the whole personality, body and soul. Germs, dislocated vertebræ, mental complexes, absence of certain glandular substances, high blood pressure, and a hundred other factors may enter into that disorder. Each must be treated by the means that can reach that particular trouble.

Faith Healing

Religious healers.—Throughout religious history ministers of religion have likewise been healers. One of the most evident demonstrations of what appears as divine, miraculous power has been in the restoration of health to individuals. Some people to-day still pin their faith to the direct healing by God through prayer or other means; but more feel that God's hand works through the trained

[1] Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Company from *Religious Foundations*, by Rufus M. Jones.

physician and nurse, who bring into play all that we have learned concerning the laws of the universe. But faith healing cannot be dismissed without examination.

Mental healing.—The long story of mental healing through the centuries presents many lights and shadows. Æsculapius was the healing god of the Greeks. Here is a typical inscription from his temple at Epidaurus, illustrating the thousands of cures purported to have been effected: "Some days back a certain Caius, who was blind, learned from an oracle that he should repair to the temple, put up his fervent prayers, cross the sanctuary from right to left, place his five fingers on the altar, then raise his hand and cover his eyes. He obeyed, and instantly his sight was restored amid the loud acclamations of the multitude." According to Tacitus the Roman Emperor Vespasian likewise healed a blind man and at another time a lame man. It is against the background of such accounts that we must read the accounts of the biblical healings.

In quest of miracles.—The canonization of saints by the Roman Catholic Church depends on the authentication of two miracles by proper witnesses. The most frequent are of healing. Although it seems to have made no verifiable improvement in the health statistics the king's touch for scrofula was supposed to have effected numerous cures. Even to-day such Roman Catholic shrines as Lourdes in France, visited annually by three hundred thousand pilgrims, and Saint Anne de Beau Pre in Canada, bear testimony to the fact that thousands have enough faith in them to make long pilgrimages, and the votive offerings left prove that their faith has not entirely been in vain. No one need doubt that amid all the fraud, all the incidents inadequately authenticated by evidence or by medical diagnosis, there have been numerous valid healings.

Power independent of object.—It is likewise true that "cures" can be claimed by those modern healing cults which have such a strong appeal to the large element on the border ground of health who are not fully adjusted to an artificial city life. This does not prove the theories, however. That the relics of Saint Rosalia at Palermo were

pronounced by an anatomist as the bones of a goat, and not of a woman, did not affect their healing power for those who believed that they were the bones of a beautiful saint. Because some people are helped by holding the thought that "all is Infinite Mind and its infinite manifestations," it does not follow that the philosophy that denies the reality of evil, sickness, and sin is true.

The power of mind over body.—One or two things are clear from this long history. Materialistic medicine has too long gone on the assumption that men were afflicted by such objective things as diseases, and that the science of health could ignore the human mind, which test tube and microscope are powerless to investigate. Though diseases *are* caused by germs, healthy persons are throwing off hundreds and thousands daily. Health is the successful adjustment of the organism to its total environment. Worry, disappointment, and sorrow are causes of diseases which no drugs can touch. Even our age of science admits the possibility of the stigmata of Saint Francis, who, through continual brooding on the Passion of our Lord, secured on his hands and feet the prints of the nails and a wound in his side. Everyday experiment shows that a person can raise a blister with a postage stamp if he only thinks that it is a mustard plaster. No logician can show how an idea can affect a thing, but it is the fact that lies at the basis of mental healing.

The Power of Faith

Faith does remove mountains.—Faith is the opposite of fear. It is the necessary mental attitude for health. Jesus said that even the minimum of faith could produce the maximum of results. Where faith was not found, even he could perform no great works. *In the hands of the sincere, faith taps the great unrealized resources of a spiritual universe;* in the hands of the charlatan faith may be the means of duping the credulous. We can thank God that faith in relics and shrines is passing, as we believe that faith in meaningless abstractions such as Mind will likewise pass; but the day will never come when it does not make all of the difference in the world for health

whether or not we trust a living, acting, gracious heavenly Father revealed in Jesus, who brought the good news that health was part of the good life of the kingdom of God. Jesus could say to those who came unto him, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." Faith possesses the same power to-day to remove mountains and plant verdant trees in the midst of the sea.

Trusting, not tempting.—But faith in God should not mean dependence solely on prayer for healing. When God has given us minds to develop a science of medicine, it is tempting him, not trusting him, to reject that mediation of the divine help. God is not a single factor opposed to all medicines and hospital care. He is not a last resort when the doctor fails. Such an absentee deity is a very different being from the permeating reality who is the loving Father whom Jesus trusted. Faith in that God means utilizing all that has been learned about his action in the world. To ignore such knowledge is not faith but unbelief.

The Importance of Health for Religion

Temples of God.—Christianity has always reverenced the body when it has been truest to its Founder. Paul also exhorted us to "glorify God in your body." The mortification of the flesh and the cultivation of asceticism were pagan importations into Christianity. Gymnasiums find their places in modern churches because health is a concern of religion. Not only are hospitals institutions of mercy: they seek to build up the "temples of the living God."

Not the final end.—But Christianity is not a gospel of health. A perfect body is a means, not an end. Health is not the final aim of life. The meaning and worth of life are infinitely more important, and their answer lies in the field of the mind. Spirit is more significant than matter. The great boon of religion is not redemption from pain or salvation from sickness. Any cult that makes central the healing of the body, which it at the same time denies, *is* materialistic in its aim and outlook. It is not necessary to go to the extent of glorifying pain and

sickness for their place in trying and testing the soul. These are evils, but there are much worse evils: sinful desires, a perverse heart, an evil will. These concerned primarily the great Physician of humanity. Victory over sin is more important than victory over ill health except in so far as the latter helps win the former victory. Religion is not simply a means to health; it should be a buoyant power in the midst of ill health.

Victory amid ill health.—This should be emphasized particularly for those who have placed a wrong interpretation on "If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do." Paul tells us that thrice he prayed that the thorn in his flesh might depart from him (2 Cor. 12. 8-10). The prayer was not thus answered, but he was given grace to bear with his weakness, and even glory in it. The hour when faith is most essential is in that state when one realizes that good health is irredeemably lost. Then is when we need the "power of Christ" resting on us. Even if physical health cannot be restored, God has other and better gifts, which he can give unto those who trust him.

The Benefits of Religion for Health

Peace of mind.—But the spiritual mission of religion will not be without help in preserving bodily health. It should bring first of all *peace of mind.* Shakespeare asked:

> **"Canst thou minister to a mind diseased;**
> **Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,**
> **Raze out the written troubles of the brain,**
> **And with some sweet oblivious antidote**
> **Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff**
> **Which weighs upon the heart?"**

That is the ministry of religion. The person who genuinely believes in God and trusts him must be an optimist or deny his own faith. The wide prevalence of nervous disorders in our day is an eloquent testimony to the failure of religion to bring unity and peace to the mind. Souls torn by worry and distraught by fears need above all else *faith.* The legacy of Jesus was his peace (John

14. 27). "Be not anxious," for your heavenly Father knoweth. Better than any formula of autosuggestion is the perfect confidence expressed by Isaiah: "Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind *is* stayed *on thee*" (Isa. 26. 3). We do need a mind cure, and it is the good news of Jesus about God. Trust in that God should bring into our hearts the "peace that passeth all understanding."

Temperate living.—Religion cultivates temperate, rational living, which is the basis for health. Together with a mind at peace the individual needs a well-chosen diet, fresh air, sleep, and exercise. Sobriety, temperance, and self-control are the first virtues that religion seeks to cultivate. A Christian should be a better life-insurance risk simply because his religion leads him to avoid the excesses of riotous living. As we read one of Paul's catalogues of vices, against which he warned his converts—drunkenness, revelings, lasciviousness—which are to be replaced by the fruit of the Spirit—self-control—we appreciate anew the importance of the religious motivation of conduct (Gal. 5. 19-23). A religion that teaches that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit cannot but make for health.

Forgetfulness of self.—Religion is a boon to health, likewise, by turning our attention away from ourselves and directing it to unselfish service for others. A person who does nothing but brood over his own disappointments, physical weaknesses, and ailments can hardly help being sick. The Christian faith empowers for service. It turns the searchlight outward upon a world of need where there are loads to be borne. It is in marked contrast that the most prominent of our modern healing cults does not provide free clinics for the treatment of disease by its own methods. It does not take the individual out of his own quest for health. There is a remarkable little woman in a tropical climate, frail of body and often bedridden for weeks, who puts to shame half the strong men of the mission by what she accomplishes. Instead of brooding over her weak body she throws herself so whole-heartedly and unreservedly into self-giving friendship to those about her that she largely succeeds in overcoming her physical handi-

caps. It is he who is willing to lose his life for others who finds it. It is "the wretch concentrated all in self" who finds the quest for health self-defeating. Religion promotes health by giving men more worth-while, unselfish objectives for which to live.

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life? And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith? Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. (Matt. 6. 24-34.)

Wherefore let no one glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's. (1 Cor. 3. 21-23.)

And Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they who are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you: but whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all. For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Mark 10. 42-45.)

CHAPTER V

CONSECRATION

1. Is any Christian excused from a life of utter consecration? How many professed followers of Jesus conceive discipleship in such terms?
2. Distinguish zeal from fanaticism.
3. Describe your conception of a consecrated layman in your profession.
4. Need we ever be disloyal to our church in order to be loyal to Christ?
5. Is there a place for consecrated ignorance in the Christian ministry?
6. What interests or practices should sincere consecration exclude from your life?
7. What fields in your community stand most in need of consecrated workers?

The word "consecration" signifies "to set aside as holy." We are familiar with the consecration of buildings for public worship. We have probably seen the consecration of ministers and deaconesses. The rite of consecration sets them aside for appointed tasks. This idea is to be found in the Old Testament from the earlier to among the later writings (Judg. 17. 12; 2 Chron. 26. 18).

A Universal Demand

Double morality.—In the minds of many, mankind is divided into two classes—those following sacred professions, who are consecrated unto God, and those following secular professions and not thus set aside. This view provides a double morality, as in the days of monasticism, when expectations concerning ordinary men and women differed from the "counsels of perfection" demanded of those following a "holy life."

The words of Jesus.—This division does not commend itself in the light of the summons of Jesus Christ. Consecration was to him less an act that set a few apart from the bulk of humanity than a compelling sincerity of pur-

pose which should fill everyone with holy zeal. Special sacrifices might be involved for unique tasks, but consecration was the mark of every true Christian. No assemblage of proof texts can adequately demonstrate the necessity he lays upon everyone for a whole-hearted loyalty. "No man can serve two masters. . . . But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. . . . For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother. . . . Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 6. 25, 33; 12. 50; 7. 21.) Such words might be multiplied manyfold.

Expert testimony.—Consecration may be best studied through example. No man of the last century excelled William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, in his devotion to the cause of Christ as he saw it. When interviewed by a journalist in 1894 he thus gave expression to his conception of the meaning of consecration:

> **It involves to my mind the duty of every Christian man to place himself and all he possesses, life included, fully and freely, without reserve, at the service of God—literally—here and now. That has always been the meaning of consecration to me. It has seemed to be a mere sham and pretense on any other interpretation. Is not this what Paul means when he says, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service"?[1]**

In response to the inquiry as to whether there might not be two standards—one for the like of Paul, and the other for the average Christian—the veteran replied, "If it does not signify that a man on becoming a Christian becomes voluntarily under obligation to serve his King with all the capacity, goods, influence, time, and everything else he may possess which is likely to advance the interest of his Master, I don't know what it does mean." The interviewer felt that this interpretation must have come out of the long years of undivided service which the cam-

[1] Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Company from *The Life of William Booth*, by Harold Begbie.

paigner had given; but General Booth recalled the facts concerning his early experience: "I had no prospect of a ministerial life in those days. I had a laborious and anxious calling which took all my strength and attention many hours per day. . . . To become a minister and have no other concern but how best to promote the glory of my God and the salvation of men, I remember to this hour, appeared altogether beyond my reach. But if I could not become a minister I could fight on in such a sphere as I occupied and with such means as I could scrape together."

Consecration in Every Task

Christian work.—A double morality, which would confine consecration to a few Christians, arises from a false dualism and a wrong interpretation of religious work. A noble-minded and successful business man conceives the idea that he should retire from the work of money-making and devote the rest of his life to service and to religious causes. No one would minimize such an aspiration, but it may be that the greatest "religious work" such a man could perform would consist in remaining at work in the field in which he has proved his efficiency, demonstrating there that the work of the world can be done in a Christian manner. The kingdom of God may not be eating and drinking, but it does consist in organizing all of life around Christian principles. Our Christian consecration is not revealed primarily in so-called "church work." It is of course true that no one giving eight or ten hours a day to clerking in a store or tilling a field can devote the same amount of time to church activities expected from a minister or deaconess. But these activities likewise should be Christian work. Is a man a Christian? If he is a landlord, ask his tenant. If he is a merchant, ask his customers and employees. Their answer is worth more than his pastor's or that of the person who has simply heard him pray in class meeting. Christian consecration marks the social vision of every sincere worker who sees in his own task a sacrament given of God.

Inspiration for routine.—This is beautifully illustrated in a legend current in Poland, which likewise demonstrates

that a living Messianic hope has not died in all of Judaism. A stranger came to a blacksmith and asked what he was doing.

The blacksmith replied, "I am shoeing horses in order that the horse on which the Messiah rides may be well shod."

The stranger passed on to a weaver. "What are you doing, my friend?"

"I am weaving cloth that will be fit for a coat which the coming Messiah may wear."

Last of all he passed on to an embroiderer. "What are you doing, my friend?"

"I am embroidering a coat for the Messiah to wear when he comes riding in glory." If such a religious spirit inspired Christian workmen, if they took more seriously the words of the Messiah who has come—"Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, *even* these least, ye did it unto me"—then consecration would become coterminous with life itself.

A Christian Exclusion Act

Concentration.—There is no true consecration without concentration. We cannot set ourselves apart for main things without neglecting nonessentials. Such was preeminently the case with Paul. "One thing *I do,* forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3. 13, 14). The one thing a talented young man who came to Christ lacked was just such a single-minded concentration upon the great business at hand (Mark 10. 21). Gamaliel Bradford picturesquely described William Fitzgerald in the words, "Like many people who have no main object in life he was often busy from morning till night." The greatest enemy of the best is the good. One of the perils of our day is that we frazzle out at the ends in the pursuit of goals that are not wrong in themselves but which divert us from the primary ends of life. It is highly necessary to make a living, but life should be more than "a long, dismal, conjugation of the verb 'to eat.'" Amusements have a necessary and important place in life, but to

keep amused is no sufficient end for existence. We can be busy about many good things without engaging in any endeavor that enables us justifiedly to say, "To this end have I been born, and to this end am I came into the world" (John 18. 37).

Using the best.—Consecration does not mean narrow-mindedness. Young people rightly turn away from religious fanaticism. In the face of the whole world of interests which God has given us, to be willfully blind to any of them is to reject some of the avenues by which revelation comes. It was Paul again who said, "All things are yours" (1 Cor. 3. 21). Instead of the names of personal leaders we can substitute in harmony with his idea the thought that art, literature, sport, music, and inventions are all ours. But we are not to be possessed by any of these things. They are for our use, not to master us. "Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." He is to be the focus of our life because he is the rightful owner. "Ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body" (1 Cor. 6. 19, 20).

One Supreme Loyalty

The highest loyalty.—Consecration means the acceptance of a supreme loyalty. Jesus expressed this in hyperbolic phrasing: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10. 37). Such words are difficult of comprehension in a country like China, where filial loyalty has been exalted to the topmost rung in the ladder of virtues. They demonstrate, however, the necessity for one supreme allegiance. When devotion to country or to political party or even family ties conflicts with loyalty to the cause of Jesus Christ, then our consecration brooks no compromising equivocation.

Conflict of loyalties.—There is always the danger in exalting loyalty that we may make of it our religion. The strength of every organization depends on the unswerving fidelity of those composing the group. Hence, loyalty is stressed as a virtue without examination of the merits of the cause to which men and women are asked to be loyal.

Loyalty is good, but character is endangered when loyalties conflict. "My country right or wrong" is the creed of loyalty, and the like is applied in scores of other cases. Disloyalty seems despicable, but we must always ask, Disloyalty to whom? Who has a right to demand our final loyalty? We must remember, as Dean Inge has reminded us, "The modern world is full of men who have bartered away their integrity of soul to preserve the unity of the party or the unbroken tradition of the organization." It may be that disloyalty to an organization may be the only means of saving our soul because it is the only means of remaining faithful to Christ and humanity's God.

Misdirected loyalties.—Consecration *in* our task is never enough. We must be consecrated to something that is worthy. Loyalty does not sanctify a base end that has evoked sacrificial service. It is the tragedy of our loyalties that they are prostituted to so many low aims. Earlier in the chapter we have carefully guarded this exposition against a narrow interpretation of Christian service. The callings of God are as wide and as varied as the talents of men and the needs of humanity. But thousands are consecrated to mere money-making, to pandering to low animal desires, and to the worship of the gods of Success and Mammon and Mars. Though all life may be sacred, all causes are not hallowed. Of some of the most outstanding examples of consecration may it be said, "They do it for a corruptible crown," and a crown that literally reeks with corruption. If one half the intelligent zeal were put in promoting the kingdom of righteousness as is given to some political machines, there would be not half the reason for pessimism that now exists. The world needs deeper consecration; but, beyond that, our loyalties must find a more enlightened focus about the person of Christ.

All That I Am

Adequate instruments.—Consecration can never be divorced from a consideration of the life that is consecrated. That shares importance with the cause which elicits the whole-hearted devotion. We have learned to sing with Frances R. Havergal:

"Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee;
. . . . . .
Take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for thee."

That is beautiful self-giving, but its effectiveness depends on the quality and texture of the life that is offered on the altar of God. Jesus said, "For their sakes I sanctify myself" (John 17. 19). We worship him not because he set himself apart for the sake of humanity. Others have followed in his stead and have imitated such sanctification. But no one else has had such a life to offer. As has been well said, the Gulf Stream can flow through a reed; but more of it can flow through a pipe, and still more through the ocean. The life of God can flow through us only as we are consecrated to do his will, but the extent of the divine power in us depends on the fullest development of all of those talents with which God has endowed us. Neglect of God-given capacities is never a mark of consecration to his will. It shows that we have been satisfied with dedicating less than the whole.

Utilizes all our ability.—Consecration is never a substitute for ability and merit. Peter was not the human hero at Pentecost because he was more consecrated than the other disciples but because he had a more fiery tongue, a readier intellect, and more persuasive speech than his duller-witted brethren. He had, in short, *more to consecrate.* It has often been true that "God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong" (1 Cor. 1. 27). That has been because the wise and the strong have not laid their wisdom and strength on the altar of dedication; it has never been *because of* their foolishness or weakness that God has been able mightily to use certain individuals, but *in spite of* these handicaps. Consecration does not bring clarity to a befuddled intellect nor does it lend charm to a repellent personality.

"For their sakes."—Nevertheless, self-realization is a false goal in life. Talent is not given for personal enjoyment. It is a trust to be utilized for the benefit of all. It is instructive to contrast in this relation two of the most famous natural wonders in America—Yellowstone

Park and Niagara Falls. Both are resplendent glories and ornaments in the duller setting of a continent's landscape. Both draw thousands of tourists annually to behold and wonder in contemplative awe. But there is this difference: Yellowstone is a sight of refreshing beauty but it is consecrated to no further end. The power generated by the onrushing volume of water in the Niagara River is utilized to turn darkness into day for thousands of Canadian and American homes. It drives the wheels of industry and lifts the burdens from the backs of millions. Niagara is very definitely sanctified "for their sakes." And by so much more as the Niagara exceeds the mill race in the back pasture does its consecration bring back greater value to men. There are lives like the Yellowstone, beautiful to contemplate, but ministering only to the æsthetic enjoyment of men and women; there are other lives like the Niagara River, which bring light unto darkness and power unto weakness. They are sanctified unto service.

Christian zeal.—The mark of the vitality of a conviction is the intensity of our passion in acting upon that belief. A Christlike zeal should characterize every follower of the Nazarene. Anæmic religion never enlists enthusiasm. The crusaders were very imperfect representatives of the Christ spirit but they were zealous if not always wise. It is a misfortune to-day that too often religious enthusiasm is to be found in the inverse proportion to sane insight into life. Self-development has sapped the intensity of social purpose. It is forgotten that the development of all of the capacities latent within us should awaken the desire to shed abroad the more of God's fullness. Our age is seeing the ineptitude of military figures such as "Soldiers of the cross, arise" and "Onward, Christian soldiers" to express the zealous consecration of the Christian worker. Another of our hymns has caught the spirit more truly in the lines:

> "Be strong!
> We are not here to play, to dream, to drift;
> We have hard work to do and loads to lift.
> Shun not the struggle; face it. 'Tis God's gift.

"Be strong!
Say not the days are evil—who's to blame?—
And fold the hands and acquiesce—oh, shame!
Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name.

"Be strong!
It matters not how deep intrenched the wrong,
How hard the battle goes, the day how long;
Faint not, fight on! To-morrow comes the song."

And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he spake the saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. But he turning about, and seeing his disciples, rebuked Peter, and saith, Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men. And he called unto him the multitude with his disciples, and said unto them, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it. For what doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? For what should a man give in exchange for his life? (Mark 8. 31-37.)

I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings and meal-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. (Amos 5. 21-24.)

If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have *wherewith* to complete it? Lest haply, when he hath laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all that behold begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, as he goeth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and asketh conditions of peace. So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14. 26-33.)

CHAPTER VI

SELF-SACRIFICE

1. Should we distinguish between sacrifice of pleasures and sacrifice of self?
2. Why should we sacrifice ourselves for the benefit of someone else?
3. If some people are naturally more unselfish than others, should they be commended as much for their sacrifices?
4. Is the cost of an endeavor an incentive or a deterrent?
5. What does following Jesus cost in your particular situation in life?
6. Do you think the church should have an ethical test for membership?
7. Which do men shrink from more—financial sacrifices or personal sacrifices?
8. Is it possible for a person to be too unselfish?

A universal demand.—A universal accompaniment of religion is sacrifice. Part of the fruit of the soil shall be brought back unto the god. Representatives of flocks and herds shall be slain as offerings unto the deity. In most primitive religions a worshiper would not think of coming before his god with empty hands. Sometimes the sacrifices are thought of in the crude sense of buying the favor of the god; in other instances they are looked upon as a bond of fellowship.

The Christian sacrifice.—It is distinctive of the religion of the Old Testament at its best and of all true Christianity that the only valid sacrifice is the sacrifice of self. Such passages as Amos 5. 21-24 and Isa. 1. 10-17 were epochal in stating the requirements of a moral religion. As the psalmist asserts:

For thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it:
Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.
(Psa. 51. 16, 17.)

The summons of Jesus.—Few words of Jesus are reported in condemnation of the Jewish sacrificial system of

his time, though it is abundantly clear that ceremonialism had no significance in the religion of the heart which he proclaimed (Mark 7. 1-23); but over and over again he emphasizes the need for self-sacrifice if one is to follow the Christian way (Mark 8. 34-37; Luke 14. 25-35). "And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10. 38). In the preceding chapter on consecration there was occasion to quote the word of Paul on the necessity of presenting our bodies as "a living sacrifice" in contrast to the dead sacrifices on heathen altars.

How Do We Sacrifice Self?

More than deprivation.—Cross bearing and sacrifice have become such trite, proverbial expressions in the Christian Church that their sharp edge has been dulled. In our mechanical civilization, specializing in motor cars, bathtubs, vacuum cleaners, and a hundred other ministrations to personal comfort, sacrifice is most often deprivation of some one of these things. Going without a new dress is a sacrifice, but in just what way is it a sacrifice of self? Staying home from a ball game may mean less pleasure, but does it in any way sacrifice our essential personality? May not a larger self thus come into being?

Things are necessary.—It must be granted that while deprivation of things is something different from the sacrifice of self, our personal selves can be very greatly circumscribed by a lack of the material aids to life. Money can buy travel, opportunities for cultural advantages, and the means to full efficiency. Although a man's life does not consist in the abundance of things he possesses, still, their absence can prove a handicap which is with difficulty overcome. To go without some things and certain immediate enjoyments may lead to larger life, but does Christianity call for a genuine sacrifice of the self when its Founder affirmed, "I came that they may have life, and may have *it* abundantly"?

What is altruism?—Some would go so far as to doubt all altruism and self-sacrifice. We go without in order to make some other good possible, which we are convinced is in the long run the greater good, else we would not

thus have chosen. Hence, the person who sacrifices immediate pleasures for permanent values is simply wise, not virtuous. At every moment in our life we make choices which exclude certain other courses. All acts are to this extent sacrificial, but if this is true, how can we single out a certain group of acts as self-sacrificing?

Is Self-Sacrifice Moral?

Treason to self.—Jesus said unto his disciples, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself" (Mark 8. 34). We are familiar with the crime of treason. A man who denies his country, like Benedict Arnold, is considered infamous even by those whom he favors. Peter denied his Lord, and tradition affirms that to his death he was followed by remorse for this act of disloyalty. He asked to be crucified with head downward, for he was not worthy to die as had Jesus. If the denial of a friend or a cause is despicable, why should the denial of self be a virtue? Has self-sacrifice been appropriated for the denial of minor comforts because we have become quite dubious about the justification of a genuine sacrifice of self? The poet wrote:

> "Love took the harp of life and smote on all the chords with might,
> Smote the chord of self, that, trembling, passed in music out of sight."

But if one is to love his neighbor as himself, if one's own personality is of value as well as the personalities of his loved ones, is it moral that this self should pass out of sight any more than any other self? If every person is an end, and never to be used as a mere means, can even Christ's law of love demand that we deny ourselves to affirm someone else?

Unreasonable demands.—The homes of any community give abundant illustrations of sacrifices the judgment of which we may question. They are not like going without candy during Lent or some other petty delusion of our selfish instincts. A husband slaves away, sacrificing every personal enjoyment, that his wife may be kept in ease and idleness. A daughter stays at home and takes advan-

tage of none of the opportunities for self-advancement open to her because her parents feel that they have a right to her time in return for their earlier care. Every instance is a special case. The willingness to forget self is the most glorious enthusiasm of humanity, but the grossest form of selfishness is that which takes the sacrificing love of others as our due. All honor to the parent or child who puts behind him all thought of self and loyally devotes time, money, and untiring devotion to the needs of the loved one; but shame upon that selfish person who will accept all this as a matter of course simply to make his own life a little easier. It is a part of unselfishness to estimate how much self-sacrifice we have a right to allow others to make on our behalf. This applies to groups as well as individuals. All honor to the men and boys of all nations who held not their lives dear but poured out their blood on battlefields for causes that were represented to them as sacred; but shame upon the nations of the world if they are willing to go on invoking that spirit in behalf of commercial concessions and imperialistic rivalries.

Denying the Supremacy of Self

Interlocking lives.—We have seen that self-sacrifice is immoral which overlooks the equal value and importance of the self-giving personality; but it is quite another thing to affirm that the furtherance of our own little selves is the most important thing in the world. When Peter denied his Master he repudiated his supreme allegiance to Jesus. When we deny our own selves we not only turn our backs upon a few petty comforts but reject the entire idea that our foremost allegiance is simply to ourselves. Self-sacrifice is the frank confession of interlocking lives. I must deny myself in order to affirm the whole. I must deny myself because my own comfort and convenience and welfare are not the most important things in the universe. Without such a spirit there is no fair name possible.

> **"The wretch, concentered all in self,**
> **Living, shall forfeit fair renown,**
> **And, doubly dying, shall go down**
> **To the vile dust from whence he sprung,**
> **Unwept, unhonored, and unsung."**

Self must abdicate the throne. We must be willing, if need be, to be traitors to that loyalty in order to affirm the higher loyalty of a duty that includes others as well as ourselves.

No saving of life.—Jesus was the furthest from expressing his demands in prudential terms; yet he could not refrain from the observation, "Whosoever shall seek to gain his life shall lose it: but whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it" (Luke 17. 33). Things can be saved. Life must be spent. He who subordinates self to a cause beyond us will have a nobler self than the man who has made that the supreme end.

The Cost of High Endeavor

Counting the cost.—Everything worth while costs. That is the basis for the Christian stress upon self-sacrifice. The words of Jesus always breathed gracious invitation. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11. 28). But he did not minimize the cost. The two parables of the man building a tower and the king going forth to war were not uttered to frighten away timid disciples (Luke 14. 25ff.); they were spoken to impress everyone from the start that the adventure of God's kingdom would call for the devotion of all of their resources, and they had best take stock of the cost in order that no half-finished building of Christian character might be left standing as a mockery to the cause. They are a summons to self-renunciation. "Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14. 33).

The road of sacrifice.—This is the language of all high endeavor. For months and years a young man, changing his business, used to kiss his wife and little ones good night and go back to the office and pore over his work to master the details. That is repeated in varied form and degree in any successful work. A medical student went to Vienna to observe a certain famous surgeon. He arrived at seven o'clock in the morning and went immediately to the medical college but discovered that the physician had already completed his lectures for the day and had begun the

round of his other work. The aspirations of a young historian to be a leader in his field lasted until he discovered the technical equipment, the patient study of old manuscripts, and the painstaking cataloguing of details, and he decided that this was not the work for him. Every worth-while endeavor demands that we sit down and count the cost in hours and days of patient drudgery, toil, and sacrifice.

The Cost of Discipleship

The extremest instance.—Jesus expressed the cost of being his follower in terms that even in his day must have been hyperbole: "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14. 26). That is sometimes necessary even to-day. A young Chinese student came to the president of a missionary college with the expectation of making a decision for Christ. The president reminded the youth that he would be in charge of the funeral obsequies of his lately deceased father. All the other relatives were heathen. Would he have rites in harmony with his new Christian faith? The boy saw that it would mean hating his own relatives and shrank back from paying the price. Such instances happen less often in countries like America, but in how many cases would a decision for the Christian ministry or the mission field bring with it a personal tension within the family on the part of those who felt this a "senseless sacrifice"?

An ethical test.—There is an increasing tendency among Protestant churches to minimize the place of doctrinal tests for membership. Those opposing this tendency rightfully fear the results of throwing the roll of the church open to all who would write their names thereon. How can such long be called a Christian church? What we need, however, is a church that is as inclusive as Jesus and as exclusive as Jesus, a church that erects no doctrinal tests emphasizing what he considered unimportant but which does stress ethical requirements that he placed in the foreground. Conventional respectability is a sufficient mark for the average church member. Not so with Jesus.

He lived a heroic, sacrificial life and called disciples to that life. It ought to cost more than it does for a man to be considered a follower of Christ.

Paying the price.—In a civilization that is as far from being Christian as is our own it is impossible for a man or woman or boy or girl to follow the socially conventional and at the same time give Jesus the supreme allegiance. There is too much economic exploitation, racial and personal prejudice, and social injustice to escape opposition if we are sincere in that allegiance. In the days of monasticism the consecrated disciple retired from the contaminating taint of the world to lead the contemplative, religious life. We believe that the kingdoms of this world can only be the kingdoms of our Lord and Christ as his followers live in these kingdoms according to a different principle. That always demands a willingness to pay a sacrificial price.

The Appeal of Sacrifice

The meaning of the cross.—The cross has ever been the central symbol of our faith. It stands for a supreme sacrifice. To say that the cross of Christ has had redemptive significance for mankind is not to argue a point of theology but to state a fact to which millions will testify. "For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10. 45). Jesus did not exalt his sacrifice as a substitute for that of others. We are to take up our *own* cross and bear it. Jesus' death on Calvary did not make sacrificial service on the part of his followers unnecessary, but revealed that this alone was the way unto life that is truly eternal.

The compelling magnet.—It is the sacrificing personality of Christ which has been the magnetic force of our religion. But the sufferings of Christ were not completed (Col. 1. 24). Christianity loses its appeal when its followers do not genuinely answer with the hymn writer:

"Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No, there's a cross for everyone,
And there's a cross for me."

Thomas is reported to have said concerning an appearance of the risen Christ, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20. 25). And men will not believe in the power of a risen Christ to-day unless they can see the print of the nails in the hands and in the feet of those who march under his banner. The compelling magnet is a suffering and crucified Christ.

The martyr spirit.—No cause can succeed which does not evoke the sacrificial self-giving of followers. The blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the church because it is the corn of wheat falling into the ground and dying which bears fruit. The cynic insists that the martyrs gave their lives for a cause they did not understand and for which they would not have given their lives had they understood. Little does he know the motives that move men. There is virility, at least, in the pacifist movement because it is not an affair of the musty study desk, where the absurdity of war is demonstrated, but a self-sacrifice that exceeds the sacrifices of war—a willingness to be killed, if necessary, rather than to kill. That spirit is unconquerable. It may yet result in the overthrow of the war system.

Redemptive blood.—In the epilogue to *Saint Joan,* Bernard Shaw brings back to life the main characters in the play to give post-mortem reflections for the education of the readers. De Stogumber, a chaplain who was prominent in the Inquisition trial of the Maid of Orleans, confesses: "I did a very cruel thing once because I did not know what cruelty was like. I had not seen it, you know. That is the great thing: you must see it. And then you are redeemed and saved."

Cauchon, the presiding bishop, then asks, "Were not the sufferings of our Lord Christ enough for you?"

De Stogumber replies: "No. Oh, no; not at all. I had seen them in pictures, and read of them in books, and been greatly moved by them as I thought. But it was of no use: it was not our Lord that redeemed me but a young woman whom I saw actually burnt to death."

The bishop returned, "Must, then, a Christ perish in

torment in every age to save those that have no imagination?"[1]

Most men do have little imagination. They have to be able to put their hands upon very definite nail prints in order to believe in the redemptive power of Christ. In a strictly moral sense it is true, "No bloodshed, no remission of sins!" (Heb. 9. 22, Moffatt translation.)

[1] *Saint Joan*, by G. Bernard Shaw; Brentano's; page 154.

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.

And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach *hither* thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed. (John 20. 24-29.)

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all the nations be blessed. So then they that are of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them. Now that no man is justified by the law before God, is evident: for, The righteous shall live by faith; and the law is not of faith; but, He that doeth them shall live in them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Brethren, I speak after the manner of men: Though it be but a man's covenant, yet when it hath been confirmed, no one maketh it void, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. Now this I say: A covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise: but God hath granted it to Abraham by promise. What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made; *and it was* ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not *a mediator* of one; but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could make alive, verily righteousness would have been of the law. But the scripture shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. (Gal. 3. 6-22.)

CHAPTER VII

DOUBT AND DISBELIEF

1. What elements of Christian faith give young people the most occasion for doubts?
2. What constructive value lies in unbelief?
3. Distinguish atheism, agnosticism, and open-mindedness. Who in your opinion is a freethinker?
4. Should the creedal statements of our churches be modernized?
5. Should we wait until we settle all of our own religious problems before we exercise a missionary spirit?
6. Can we safely ignore doubts in a stress upon the practical aspects of religion?
7. What responsibility rests upon the church in the religious training of children in the Sunday school in view of the increasing numbers who are receiving a higher education?

Doubt not a sin.—The problem of doubt will sooner or later perplex the personal religious experience of most Christians. Intellectual difficulties or practical hardships force upon us questionings concerning the validity of our faith. Doubt is not something reprehensible, for belief cannot come at will. We cannot force ourselves to accept what we find incredible or dubious without exercising mental dishonesty.

Extent of uncertainty.—The naturalness of doubt arises from the uncertainty that surrounds everything human. As Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes says, "Certainty is generally illusion, and repose is not the destiny of man." The mother of Alexander Whyte, the great Scotch preacher, was accustomed to interrupt the easy affirmation "as sure as death" with the warning "Nothing is as sure as death." Perplexity always surrounds us, and even love cannot turn uncertainty into certainty.

Relation to activity.—The danger of doubts lies not only in the mental strain upon our peace of mind but in the fact that we act them and live them. Few take the time or have the clarity of conception to formulate their doubts but they act on the assumptions of unbelief. They disbelieve in God when they live as though struggle were

the final word in the universe. They disbelieve in an immortal soul when they treat their fellow men as cogs in a machine, or gun fodder for imperialistic destinies, or an industrial commodity to be bought and sold. They disbelieve in the divinity of Christ when they abandon his way as "impractical."

Doubt as the Road to Truth

Value of skepticism.—We know the value of skepticism in the everyday affairs of men. When Jones waxes eloquent about what he heard on the radio last night, and Smith becomes extravagant in the claims which he makes for his car, we recognize that doubt is the road to truth.

In history.—Such has been the case in arriving at a true understanding of history. For centuries the world believed the pious fraud of the donation of Constantine—that the first Christian emperor had given huge tracts of land to the Roman Church. It was only when a skeptic by the name of Laurentius Valla arose that it was shown to be a gigantic forgery. Every lover of Washington is grateful to the historians who have shown that the legend of the little prig who boasted that he could not tell a lie was a fabrication of a tasteless eulogizer. Only by an application of critical skepticism can fact be disentangled from misleading half truths.

Other realms of knowledge.—The same is true in science. Modern philosophy began with a movement to make a bonfire of the accumulated rubbish left by the deposit of centuries. Descartes sought to doubt everything that it was possible to doubt in order that he might find a "kingdom that could be shaken." Every age passes on untested hypotheses, outworn affirmations, crude conceptions, and pious daydreams that need to be subjected to searching criticism and continual verification. There is no progress without the application of reasonable doubt, not as the passing mood of a disillusioned and disgruntled individual, but as a conscious step toward something higher. As Dean Inge said in commenting upon the story of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden, "No one can eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge without being driven out of some paradise." It is seldom convenient or

comfortable to leave a Garden of Eden that we have long considered fair even when driven out by the rude arm of stern facts. We are continually called upon to do so, however, not in the belief that we are leaving truth behind, but in order to follow in its painful pursuit.

Constructive doubt.—What is the case in other realms is likewise true with religion. Our doubts are not pits in which we bury faith but foundation stones we sink in order that, in a world of growing knowledge, we may conserve the verities by which we live. A modern scoffer thus describes the way God was presented to him in his boyhood: "He is a celestial traffic cop, hounded by whimpering weaklings who beseech him to tell them that they are on the right road, and yet keep trying to tell him which way the traffic should go." Due allowance being made for venomous exaggeration, it must be admitted that this corresponds to some popular attitudes in religion. In such a case faith was impossible until doubt had done its work. Doubts, however, are nothing to glory in. Any fool can doubt there is a God. Alfred Tennyson had not finished his testimony when he said:

> "There lives more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds."

The goal of faith lay in conquered doubt. Thus does he describe the conquest of his own faith:

> "He fought his doubts and gathered strength.
> He would not make his judgments blind,
> He faced the specters of the mind
> And laid them. Thus he came at length
> To find a stronger faith his own."

Doubt is therefore in religion likewise the road to truth. The strongest faith is that which has passed through the crucible of testing. Up painful steps we pass from hearsay to certainty.

The Dogmas of Doubt

We have described what might be called the faith of unbelief. We must pause, however, to look briefly at what might be called the current dogmas of doubt, which act as a cancer to our religious life rather than a spur to moral and intellectual attainment.

There is no truth.—There is the paralyzing doubt as to whether there is any such thing as truth. It is one thing to disbelieve in particular conclusions; it is quite another thing to doubt the existence of any universal standards or values. The mocking reply of Pilate to Jesus "What is truth?" reechoes in the modern absorption with the idea of relativity. Even mathematics, which was thought to be the one sure retreat of necessary universal truths, is admitting that parallel lines may sometimes meet, and that the sum of the angles of a triangle need not always equal two right angles. What is truth? They would tell us that justice and righteousness, as a matter of fact, are nothing but names given to private preferences. If it works out to your advantage, you call it good, but I am just as warranted in calling it evil if it works to my disadvantage. A world of eternal values is a fiction of the imagination. There are only changing customs, the truth of which depends on their temporary utility.

Limitations of the intellect.—There is likewise the depressing doubt that, even though such a thing may exist, it is impossible for us ever to find truth. We must be modest in our estimate of the power of the human intellect. The story is related of Augustine, one of the greatest thinkers in the Christian Church, who was walking one day along the shore and found a child with a shell carrying water from the sea and pouring it into a hole in the sand.

"What are you doing, my child?" he said.

"I am emptying the ocean into this hole."

"That is impossible."

"Not more impossible than for you to empty the universe into your intellect."

Legend though it be, it emphasizes the humility with which the truthseeker must ever stand before the fountain of knowledge. The well is deep, and the vessels with which we draw are shallow indeed.

Truth is unknowable.—But to resign ourselves placidly to permanent uncertainty is to accept most incommodious quarters. It would not be particularly disturbing to admit that we can never know whether there is any such thing as ether, which extends through all space, even that which we popularly call a "vacuum." It is another matter, how-

ever, to content oneself with the agnosticism that though there may be a God, we never can have any practical assurance. Many people attempted to picture the horrible mental agony endured by Floyd Collins, the entrapped cave explorer, during the long days before death overtook him. In the light of day above the ground one could know whether an attempt was being made to effect the rescue; sealed in the cave, one could never know what the truth was. Such is that doubt which would conceive of man as an entrapped prisoner in the cave of his erring human mind so that he never can know what truth is.

No basis for optimism.—The third form of unbelief lies in the doubt that the truth is encouraging or hopeful. We *do* know the truth—the bitter truth. It is not such as to cast a rosy hue about our path but is a confirmation of our cynicism. We know that love is merely a disguised form of self-interest. We know that God did not make man, but man made God in his own image, and the ultimate realities are not spirit but matter and force. We know that religion is simply a tissue of myths and legends that amused the childhood of the race, but now that we have become men we should put away such childish things. We know that the coming of the kingdom of God on earth is an idle dream that belongs with the fictions of a golden age in the past. Yes, there is no doubt about it:

> "What are prayers in the lips of death,
> Filling and chilling with hail?
> What are prayers but wasted breath,
> Beaten back by the gale?"[1]

Nothing is more pathetic than the person who has accepted the world without God as the final answer to life's mystery and treads amidst incidental gayety the short path to the black night of death:

> "She set a rose to blossom in her hair,
> The day Faith died.
> 'Now, glad,' she said, 'and free, at last, I go,
> And life is wide.'
> But through long nights she stared into the dark
> And knew she lied."[2]

[1] "A Song of Doubt," by J. G. Holland; Charles Scribner's Sons; used by permission.
[2] "The Dead Faith," by Fannie Heaslip Lea.

The Spirit of Inquiry

Unscientific doubt.—No satisfactory case can be made for the value of these dogmas of doubt. They do not add zest to life but deprive it of every confidence. Of course, if the dogmas of doubt really are the last word, we are not warranted in dismissing them because they do not please us. Wishes are too tenuous a cobweb out of which to weave reality. Men will not go on believing in God if faith is not well founded, simply because it is good for them. We reject these conclusions not because they are in the last analysis destructive, but because they are dogmas, as unprovable as the most extravagant speculations of Christian faith.

The faith that inquires.—P. T. Barnum used to say, "More people are humbugged by believing too little than by believing too much." We have no right to be cheated by the poverty of our demand on the world. Doubt is to be met not by a dogmatic faith but by a faith that inquires. The dogmas of doubt are the havens of the tired skeptics who have stopped too soon. They are not to be offset by contrasting dogmatists who merely "strive valiantly for the faith delivered once and for all unto the saints." With Moses they must be willing to turn aside and see why (Exod. 3. 3). The mourners' bench has gone out of fashion in churches to-day. That is not so lamentable if we do not make firewood of "the inquirer's bench." For the spirit of inquiry dominates all genuine faith.

The Task of Reconstruction

A storm-and-stress period.—It is never easy to rebuild a house of faith. There is need for charity from two sources: first from those who have never passed through a period of storm and stress. They must not blame the perversity of the struggler with an inharmonious faith. But, likewise, charity must be shown by the one who has successfully waded through the stream of doubt and placed his feet firmly on the newly discovered rock. Such all too often delight in heaping up problems that a friend is not yet ready to face.

Keeping on the course.—The task of reconstruction is

vividly typified in a contrast of the building of the two great New York terminals. The builders of the Pennsylvania Station had nothing to perplex them but the engineering problems in the construction of a satisfactory edifice in the shortest possible time. In building a new Grand Central Station there was the added complexity of safely handling the thousands of passengers who poured in and out of New York City each day. Some new ideas can be added to our equipment, even as was the Pennsylvania Station; but in the reconstruction of our religious faith we must arrive each day at our destination in the midst of this rebuilding. Or, to change the figure, we cannot put into drydock to repair useless and worn-out rigging, but on the high seas of life we must sometimes repair our mast, which holds the sails in the breeze and keeps our ship to the course.

Propagating Our Faith

Nevertheless, we believe.—In the story of the healing of the epileptic boy the father expresses his confidence in the haunting phrase "I believe, help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9. 24). Such a combination of faith and doubt is found with many. It is easy to become so absorbed in our doubts that we forget that which we believe. We shrink from affirmations when we realize that "now we see in a mirror, darkly" and are altogether conscious that "not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect" (Phil. 3. 12).

Enlisting fellow seekers.—Doubt is overcome by a zeal to propagate that which we as yet only pursue. Most religious propaganda has been dominated by harsh intolerance, ignorant certainty, and denominational dogmatisms. The humble God seeker has been reticent in a missionary spirit. He has sat down to solve his doubts rather than walked by his slender particle of faith. But the quickest way to solve a problem is to enlist more in the search. Even the doubter ought to be a missionary: he should seek to propagate that which he as yet only pursues. We would propagate, not doubts, but the spirit of inquiry by which alone doubts can be solved.

An Apologetic for Christianity

Dangerous defenses.—Christian apologetics has sometimes meant skillful apologizing for discredited dogmas. Truth needs no apology for existence. It needs no defense but the freedom to stand before the world in its own right. On the other hand, even the most belligerent campaign will not defend conclusions that are invalid. The litigant on behalf of certain preconceived conclusions disqualifies himself for the fullest possession of the whole truth. Open-mindedness must cast out every semblance of bigotry. The history of Christian thought has many tragic chapters that contain the wrestling of Christian apologists to maintain untenable positions. Christian faith should be a searchlight to turn upon the dark places of life, not a tender, intellectual plant needing protection from the chilling blasts of the world's life.

Changing arguments for eternal verities.—Every age needs the intellectual buttressing of the house of faith in which it lives. We must have reasons for the faith that is in us. But the reasons are not the faith. Arguments that were once weighty may no longer compel men's assent. Arguments are for the age which created them. Eternal verities must not become so closely entwined with them that they themselves appear to be discredited when old reasons are no longer adequate. The long dialectic Paul composed in the third chapter of Galatians served his generation but answers few of the questions of our own. One of the earliest "defenses" of Christianity is the Epistle to the Hebrews. A candid reader must admit that Christian faith is not given great support by the thought of an high priest according to the order of Melchizedek, endless comparisons with the Levitical priesthood, and disquisitions on angelology. We shall be helped by other arguments, but they should lead up to the same exhortation: "Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help *us* in time of need" (Heb. 4. 16). In this same book we have the indication that the true apologetic will stress only the abiding and permanent amid that which is changing: "And this *word,* Yet once more, signifieth the

removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain. Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe" (Heb. 12. 27, 28).

Who hath believed our message? and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed? For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who *among them* considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke *was due?* (Isa. 53. 1-8.)

Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice. (Phil. 4. 4.)

Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; *in* journeyings often, *in* perils of rivers, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils from *my* countrymen, *in* perils from the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; *in* labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches. (2 Cor. 11. 24-28.)

Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof. (Matt. 7. 24-27.)

CHAPTER VIII

SORROW AND TRUST

1. Could we go on trusting a power if we were led to conclude that it was malevolent?
2. Does God's care for the individual mean that our personal happiness should be the goal of the universe?
3. Can we identify "what is" with the will of God?
4. What illustrations can be given from your community of the victorious use of sorrow and adversity?
5. What significance has the cross of Christ for a world of pain?
6. Are sorrow and happiness opposites, excluding each other?
7. Is capacity for joy possible without equal capacity for sorrow?
8. Should unexplained mysteries rob us of faith?

The great obstacle.—Doubts have been treated in the preceding chapter primarily from the intellectual point of view. But if Reason has slain the faith of thousands, Sorrow has slain its tens of thousands. The great obstacle to religion is the hard facts of life, which appear irreconcilable with faith in God, hope in a better day, and love as a way of life.

My fate.—"The problem of evil" is too distant and abstract to bother many people. A morning paper may report that forty-seven miners have been entombed and suffocated, a famine is threatening hundreds of thousands in China, a railway train runs into an open switch because a disgruntled employee thus seeks revenge, a swindler has separated an old man from the meager savings of a lifetime. We are more bored than anything else by these recitals, for the keen edge has been worn off of our sympathy. We are little disturbed by such occurrences as long as our own life runs along serenely; but the minute a horrible loss or disappointment comes to us personally, all this is changed. Can we trust a universe that has meted unto us such an ill-deserved fate?

The dilemma of faith.—Such a question will only be

put by one who still clings to the possibility of faith. There is no problem in sorrow except for the religious man. If impersonal matter and force are the ultimate realities, if there is no directing mind, if purposive good will has no place in the constitutive nature of things, then there is no problem. There remains nothing but to submit to a universe that is hostile to him and indifferent to his happiness. If we believe that we live in what is merely a material universe we must recognize that there is nothing beyond our own feeble powers to conserve the values we cherish. But the Christian believer faces a difficult dilemma. The formulation by the old Greek philosopher Epicurus has hardly been bettered: "Is God willing to prevent evil and not able? then he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence, then, is evil?"

The False Hope of Explanation

Suggested explanation.—One of our first temptations is to attempt a rational explanation of the sorrows and ills of life. But it is salvation which we need rather than explanation, and most of the explanations cut the nerve from the attempt to wipe all tears away. Evils may be necessary obstacles to the development of character, but that leads easily to the sophistry Paul faced in the question "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (Rom. 6. 1.) The element of freedom which man thinks he possesses does seem necessarily to entail the frequent wrong use of that freedom. In a world of social contacts it must follow that the innocent suffer together with the guilty. Such lines of thought do go far to absolve us from ascribing ills to the direct agency of God.

More than chance?—Nevertheless, the justification of the possibility of evil and sorrow never explains any particular sorrow. Such considerations are too impersonal and distant to afford genuine comfort when adversity strikes us. We do not feel that adversity is divine favor in disguise. It may be that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth" (Heb. 12. 6), but in that case the ways of the Lord are very different from our own. It is difficult to

avoid the conclusion, once we have embarked on the road of explanation, that it is nothing but chance which has brought ill to my door, and the religious man or woman would fain put his trust in something more than mere chance.

A Copernican universe.—More fruitful is the realization that God's care for the individual does not mean that the universe should revolve around the wants and wishes of that individual. A vast number of people still live in a Ptolemaic universe. Copernicus brought a revolution in the thought of men by his demonstration that the earth was not the center around which everything else revolved, but that it was only a tiny, insignificant part. We need a Copernican view of life's experiences. We must overcome childish egoism and see that God's care for us cannot involve the suspension of the ways of a law-abiding universe on our behalf. The through trains of divine purpose cannot be sidetracked for the little handcar of our personal happiness.

The Mystery of Goodness

Whence cometh goodness?—We must likewise realize that the problem of evil is no greater than the mystery of goodness. If it is hard, in view of the harsh blows it inflicts, to fit the Christian God into the world as we find it, it is even more difficult to account for love, beauty, and sacrifice on the hypothesis that there is no God.

Two mysteries.—One asks, "How can there be such a terrible scourge as leprosy or the plague?" Just as great a mystery is how sacrificial love can lead men to give their lives to overcome these diseases and help the sick bear their affliction. If there is a God, how could he have snatched away that loved one? But whence the love that so sweetened life and filled it with the radiance of friendship? Why should a saintly man like Bishop Bashford spend his last years in terrible suffering? But what other explanation can be given of those years of devoted living than the God in whom he quietly believed, and who (to use his own words) had given him three calls—one to the ministry, one to China, and a third to suffering?

A sufficient source.—If struggle is the only law of sur-

vival, if behavior is simply the adaptation of brute instincts, if impersonal law and merciless fate, which are no respecters of persons, hold us within their grasp, whence, then, is goodness? Roses may grow in a manure pile, but not without the seed of a rose. Water runs downhill and never rises above its source. But are we to suppose that some other law governs the ultimate explanation of the universe? Are we, who know ourselves to partake of so much of evil, the ultimate creators of all the higher moral and spiritual values of life? Or are we, rather, discoverers and transmitters? Each man will answer these questions according to his interpretation of life. They are set forth to emphasize the fact that we do not escape unexplained mystery. Do we account it most necessary to believe in a universe where evil is left unexplained, or where goodness abides an eternal mystery?

Is the Universe Trustworthy?

Just recompense.—Trust amid sorrow might be a better theme for this chapter. How can we trust in a world which metes out sorrow so lavishly? Can we trust the hand that stabs us? The ruling attempt to justify the ways of God in the Old Testament must be rejected. The orthodox Old Testament theory was that the good man was rewarded in this life with riches, happiness, and many years, while the evil man was punished with sickness and suffering. This easy solution, however, did not fit the facts then any more than it does now. Job's friends might preach a score of sermons on this text, but that did not make the ways of God plainer to the afflicted man who was not conscious of any wrongdoing for which he should be punished. He clung desperately to faith: "Though he slay me, yet will I wait for him" (Job 13. 15, margin). A modern commentator adds, "Though this is admirable tenacity of faith, can we in the long run trust a universe that slays its highest and noblest products?"

The criticism by Jesus.—We have noted in another chapter that Jesus definitely repudiated the idea that calamities are punishments from God (John 9). That is an aid to faith, but we are less willing to stand upon the

same spiritual plane and admit that riches and health may not be blessings and rewards either. Jesus observed life truly when he assumed that the tempests blew upon the houses of the wise and the foolish alike (Matt. 7. 24-27). They cannot therefore be visitations from God.

The God of the coming kingdom.—The core of the difficulty lies in conceiving of God in such a way that he is truly immanent in the universe yet is not to be identified with the universe itself and therefore directly responsible for every happening. The latter view has been called, in the history of thought, pantheism. It is hostile to true religion because it tends to wipe out all real distinctions between good and evil, joy and sorrow, beauty and ugliness. Christianity believes in an immanent God who numbers even the hairs of our heads, and without whom not a sparrow falleth; but it never affirms that what is, is the will of God. Christianity sets forth the hope of a coming kingdom of God, where the mourners shall be comforted, and where "every tear shall be wiped away from their eyes."

Man's carelessness.—An example may help to make this clear. Unclean milk brings death to the little baby in the home. The worst blasphemy, the shortest road to atheism, is to talk about an inscrutable divine Providence who in his wisdom has called this child unto himself. The underlying fallacy is the assumption that God would will that man should not keep his milk supply clean. We are not warranted in thus drawing an equation between the imperfections that exist and the divine will. We trust a spirit of love and we work together therewith, that it may be regnant in life.

A lost God.—In *The King of the Dark Chamber,* Tagore records the conversation of a man who has lost all his five children with a friend who is bowed with grief at a personal loss though he has two sons remaining. The latter marvels that the former still trusts the King instead of cursing him and doubting him as he does; but the other replies amid his greater loss: "Shall I lose my King too because I have lost my children? Don't take me for such a big fool as that." Such is the rebuke many need who are brought into the valley of sorrow. Because some loss

has come unto them, they have lost faith in God. That is the hour when we need the King most.

Meeting Life's Tests

An appointment for us.—Though we reject the idea that tribulations are sent upon us for the direct purpose of testing our faith or our courage, there is no denial that they do provide such a trial. The rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew in the ordinary course of nature; but these forces could not fail to demonstrate which man had built his house upon a rock and which had built his on sands, providing no sure foundation (Matt. 7. 24-27). We all have a date with adversity. Sooner or later we must keep it. For some, like the arrival of the bridegroom in the parable of the ten virgins, it may be postponed. But Jesus' injunction is very fitting: "Be ye therefore ready." The psalmist moaned, "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me" (Psa. 42. 7), while the triumphant cry of Paul rang out: "And not only so, but we also rejoice in our tribulations" (Rom. 5. 3). The difference between the two did not lie in different degrees of fortune. As Paul describes the stripes, shipwrecks, perils, the hunger, thirst, and cold he suffered, we are assured that "tribulations" is no exaggeration. Happiness never can depend on the preponderance of fortunate over unfortunate circumstances but on our insight, our capacity to utilize every experience and make all things work together for good as they pass through the refining fire of a trusting courageous spirit.

Winning the victory.—A helpful teacher of to-day stresses in season and out of season that life was not made for safety but for victory. He who craves safety shuns tests of the spirit; but Jesus pointed out the impossibility of the ideal of personal safety in the paradox "He who would save his life shall lose it." Each person has his own victory to win, but sooner or later this must be over personal sorrow. "To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God" (Rev. 2. 7).

The Uses of Adversity

The alchemy of faith.—There is an account in the

fourth chapter of Exodus which relates how Moses grasped a serpent, and it became a rod in his hand. Adversity is a stinging serpent, but the soul that grasps it in faith may behold it become a rod in his hand. There is an eloquent minister to-day who owes his marvelous command of Scripture to the fact that as a boy he had a handicap in speech. To overcome this misfortune he read from the Bible aloud for hours at a time. Such illustrations as these bring a hint of what the philosophers mean when they say that evil is evil, but not only that: that the same event may have several meanings, depending on the attitude which we take toward it. Adversity may strike heavy blows upon the anvil of the human spirit but by some strange alchemy it may be transmuted into victorious character.

Pain's companions.—This has been so well stated in a poem that I am led to give space to many of its stanzas:

"One day there entered at my chamber door
A presence whose light footfall on the floor
No token gave; and, ere I could withstand,
Within her clasp she drew my trembling hand.

"'Intrusive guest,' I cried, 'my palm I lend
But to the gracious pressure of a friend!
Why comest thou, unbidden and in gloom,
Trailing thy cold gray garments in my room?

"'I know thee, Pain! Thou art the sullen foe
Of every sweet enjoyment here below;
Thou art the comrade and ally of Death,
And timid mortals shrink from thy cold breath.'
. . . . . .

"And though my puny will stood straightly up,
From that day forth I drank her pungent cup
And ate her bitter bread, with leaves of rue,
Which in her sunless gardens rankly grew.

"And now so long it is I scarce can tell
When Pain within my chamber came to dwell;
And though she is not fair of mien or face,
She hath attracted to my humble place

"A company most gracious and refined,
Whose touches are like balm, whose voices kind:
Sweet Sympathy, with box of ointment rare;
Courage, who sings while she sits weaving there;

"Brave Patience, whom my heart esteemeth much,
And who hath wondrous virtue in her touch.
Such is the chaste and sweet society
Which Pain, my faithful foe, hath brought to me."[1]

A mark of progress.—It is worth noting that the capacity to suffer is a mark of progress. The inorganic realm does not possess it. The lower animals are not believed to suffer to any appreciable degree. It is the most sensitive human being who suffers the most severely. It is because of man's preeminence that he is capable of suffering. His noblest power is seen in his ability to make even of suffering a ladder on which the spirit can rise.

Suffering in God

The meaning of the cross.—In some religions God has been conceived as a Being beyond all pleasure and pain. It is the paradox of Christianity that it has dared to interpret God through a great experience of human suffering. This does not mean that we conceive of God as a being "altogether like unto ourselves," with human passions and emotions; but the cross would signify that God is not a mere spectator in a world full of infinite tragedy but is himself, in a sense, the great Sufferer. The divine personality is not less rich in feeling than our own. Even he cannot escape in the bond of spirits the need for vicarious suffering.

Vicarious suffering.—This is the highest suffering—that which we undergo for others. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah depicts the "suffering servant of Jehovah" as such a vicarious bearer of the sorrows of others. It is not contradictory that God's servant should suffer, for, as Goethe wrote,

"Who never ate his bread in sorrow,
Who never spent the darksome hours
Weeping and watching for the morrow,—
He knows ye not, ye higher Powers."

Permanent Sources of Happiness

The secret of happiness is sought even more sedulously than the fountain of perennial youth. Much of the poig-

[1] *My Uninvited Guest*, by May Riley Smith; E. P. Dutton & Company.

nancy of sorrow lies in our feeling that it shuts us out of happiness. We would do well to remember that the man who said, "Rejoice in the Lord always" was deprived of the sources of joy which we cherish most dearly. Good health, family ties, money, and personal comforts were not his. But his radiant joy should show us that permanent springs of happiness must be found elsewhere—in spheres where the vicissitudes of life cannot pierce. The safest financial investments may be rendered of no value in such catastrophic times as the war period through which the world has passed. Even the soundest body will ultimately weaken. It is given unto every man once to die, and sooner or later friends and family will pass on before us. The great sufferers have had more permanent sources of happiness, from which neither "life nor death, principalities nor powers" could separate them. In trust and contentment they have still discovered peace. And of the greatest it was said, "Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising shame" (Heb. 12. 2).

And it came to pass, that he was sitting at meat in his house, and many publicans and sinners sat down with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with the sinners and publicans, said unto his disciples, *How is it* that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? And when Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. (Mark 2. 15-17.)

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned. For before that certain came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Cephas before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, how compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? (Gal. 2. 11-14.)

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body. And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now they are many members, but one body. . . . Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof. (1 Cor. 12. 12-20, 27.)

CHAPTER IX

FELLOWSHIP

1. How would you define fellowship?
2. Is the gospel anything that can be "sent" without being lived?
3. To what extent does fellowship require uniformity?
4. What are the most divisive factors entering into the life of your community?
5. To what organizations do you belong which promote fellowship? Do any hinder a true fraternal spirit?
6. What elements distinguish the fellowship in your church from all other organizations to which you belong?
7. How can the obstacles to true fellowship in your church be overcome?
8. Can the highest ideal be other than reciprocal?

Christianity has been from the first a social religion. The anchorites who retired into the desert for lonely contemplation were a foreign growth upon its body. The only monasticism that took permanent root in the Western church was founded on the basis of a fellowship. The Dominican, Franciscan, Augustinian, and Jesuit orders were preeminent exemplifications of a fellowship that men did not find in the secular world.

Fellowship in the Early Church

The brethren.—Though this spirit has often been dulled in the long history of the church, its beginnings lay in a new realization of brotherhood. There were several significant aspects of Pentecost, a new manifestation of the Spirit of God, a new religious relationship to the risen Christ; but not least in importance was the fellowship. The account closes with the words "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and in the fellowship . . ." (Acts 2. 42, margin). The earliest word for membership in the Christian community was not "disciples" or "believers" but "brethren." The letter of Paul to the Ephesians emphasizes over and over again that the "middle wall of partition" in humanity is broken down in

Christ, and "he is our peace." Unbroken fellowship is the proof that we are his followers. "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3. 14). That was not mere theory. An early pagan writer exclaimed concerning the early Christians, "How they love one another!" This exclamation is to-day more frequently quoted by those in the scorner's seat.

Living together as Christians.—The modern reader of the New Testament who cares little for purely historical problems is usually impatient at the amount of attention given in the book of Acts and the Epistles to the question of the relation between Jews and Gentiles, and to the apparently absurd controversy over circumcision. A closer reading, especially of Galatians 2 and Acts 15, will reveal, however, that the major issue was not whether Gentiles could be eligible for reception into the Christian community; the crux of the difficulty concerned the basis for fellowship. The Jew had followed from time immemorial dietary customs that excluded him from the table of non-Jews. But the symbol of fellowship in the new brotherhood was a common meal. It was one thing to admit that Gentiles might be joint heirs of the coming kingdom; it was another thing to admit them to a table fellowship that violated all the traditions of their race and their most sacred customs. Plenty of Americans are perfectly willing in a spirit of condescension to send the gospel to foreign lands; it is quite another thing to admit Japanese and Poles and Negroes to full Christian fellowship. This question was vital and is vital, because fellowship lies at the heart of the Christian gospel.

The Fulfillment of the Individual

The completion of personality.—It is the personal aspects of Christianity with which this course is concerned rather than its social application. We must therefore stress at the outset the necessity of fellowship from the standpoint of the individual himself. "No man is the whole of himself; his friends are the rest of him." Self-realization is impossible without the stimulus of other lives. Widening contacts are essential to the development of

personality. The social instincts of humanity are not only a cementing force: they bring us into intimate association with those who are the incentive to our finest endeavors. It is frequently said that a young man or woman learns more from his associates in school than from the teachers. To the extent to which that is true the student fellowships have predominated over those with the faculty.

The power of influence.—The place of the gang in the life of the growing boy is well known to every observer of adolescent life. We are the product of all we have met and seen. They have entered into us and made us what we are. This is of course a reason why our associations must be wisely chosen. No one can long completely disregard the influences continually playing upon him.

Learning to Keep Step

The finest of the arts.—We receive in fellowship and we likewise act in fellowship if we are to count for the most. The ability to work with other people is essential in every walk of life. Along its many courses we must learn to keep step. That always means adjustment of personal preferences. A tall person cannot keep step with a short person without mutual accommodation. None of us can achieve progress in "the fine art of living together" without partaking of the same spirit.

Danger of standardization.—This ideal can of course be carried too far. Nothing dwarfs the individual more than the necessity of fitting into a prescribed mold. Perfect regimentation in "the goose step" may mean technical efficiency, but such efficiency is attained at the sacrifice of personality. It is one thing for a group to act in harmony together; it is quite another thing for a few to use entire groups as pawns in their game. There may be a place for this as well as for the shuffling individualist who puts down his foot when and where he pleases, but the best part of the world's work is done by those who in the spirit of fellowship have learned to keep step not only with men but with God.

Fraternity

A surviving ideal.—The secular name of fellowship is

"fraternity." It was one of the three watchwords of the French Revolution. We have learned that liberty needs restraint even in its own interest. If the rights of all are to be respected, the liberties of some must often be curbed. Equality has been found to be a fiction of the imagination of those prophets who had drunk too long of the new wine of their democratic enthusiasm. Physically, mentally, and in every way we are very unequal. Even equality of opportunity is a specious substitute, for there can be no equality of opportunity for unequal abilities. The equality that religion recognizes is an equality based on the infinite distance between all of us and the holy, righteous Creator. The difference between mountains and valleys becomes imperceptible at such a distance as the sun from the earth.

Mutual respect.—Fraternity, however, though an unrealized ideal, is still a valid one. The word has unfortunately become too exclusively attached to college and university organizations promoting close fellowship within small groups. Fraternity is something more than that. It recognizes the place for the more intimate groupings, but the exclusion of any from fellowship spells its denial. Fraternity does not presuppose equality but it does demand mutual respect between stronger and weaker. It cannot deny that we find some of our brethren more attractive than others but it recognizes that each part of the whole, even the "less honorable" (1 Cor. 12. 23), is indispensable to the whole. One of the finest expressions of the ideal of fraternity is to be found in this twelfth chapter of Corinthians, in which Paul combats the jealousy and absence of love which were breaking down the fraternal spirit of the church.

The Foes of Fellowship

Misunderstanding.—A lack of sympathetic understanding lies at the root of most of our failures in fellowship. The will to understand requires not so much that we be able to put ourselves in the other person's position as that we come to realize how *he* feels in that position. When John wrote the seven letters to the churches in Asia he prefaced each with the words "I know thy toil and pa-

tience . . ." or similar expressions of understanding of the hard situation they were facing. Fellowship lacks a firm foundation when sympathetic understanding is left out.

"I do not like that man," exclaimed an impetuous person.

"But you do not even know him," returned his friend.

"That is why I don't like him," replied the first.

That short conversation epitomizes the fatality to fellowship of a lack of understanding.

Clannishness.—Clannishness is a second obstacle to fraternity. "Birds of a feather flock together." That is altogether natural. Investigation and experiment in factories have shown that properly organized small groups help to promote a general spirit of fraternity. We can know only a small number intimately. But when these groupings become of so exclusive a character that individuals who should be included are left out they become detrimental. When they are so organized around controversial, divergent issues that they promote a clannish spirit, brotherhood is endangered. Religious, racial, and other differences are to-day exaggerated in a clannishness that denies the very essence of fellowship.

Prejudice.—Prejudice is a natural accompaniment of ignorance and clannishness. It is the negative aspect of preferences. It is altogether natural that we should prefer certain people and causes. Prejudice turns the guns of hatred on the unpreferred classes. Some prejudices are based probably on innate differences, but even racial prejudice has been shown to be mainly social in origin.

Social stratification.—This leads us to social stratification, which is one of the greatest obstacles to true fellowship. Wealth, education, family become the grounds for social groupings that practice snobbery and display an assumption of superiority which not only wounds the sensitive spirit but severs the bonds of fraternity. The social distinctions that intrude into the more civilized societies tend to promote not so much communities of excellence as islands of self-satisfaction, which are deadly to true personal development. The one who voluntarily isolates himself from the contaminating touch of the less

cultivated cuts the stalk that connects him with the virulent roots of society.

The Kinds of Fellowship

The communities we share.—Fellowship is to-day promoted by a legion of organizations. L. P. Jacks, the celebrated editor of the *Hibbert Journal,* has made this classification of the various communities commanding our loyalty: (1) the trade union, or community of labor (to this might be added the chamber of commerce or other business grouping); (2) the friendly society, or community of insurance; (3) the university, or community of learning; (4) the guild of fine arts, or the community of excellence; (5) the social club, or community of friendship; (6) the church, or the community of faith; (7) the family, or the community of love; (8) the political state, or community of government. An American may think likewise of luncheon clubs, mothers' clubs, and a host of other common bases upon which fraternity is founded. The centers around which groups can be gathered are as varied as the interests of humanity.

The Fellowship of Faith

The peculiarity of the church.—The church has been designated above as a fellowship of faith. There will be no argument on the question that the church ought to be a fellowship. If it is to be a legitimate heir of the apostolic church, it dare not lose this credential. A religious census card in a community was returned with the notation of "Masonry" as religious preference. This should remind us forcibly of the fact that the fellowship of the church should not be a mere fraternity. After what has been said earlier in the chapter, no one can take such an assertion as a disparagement of sociability. Lack of sociability in a church does militate against true worship. Except in an atmosphere of brotherhood men will find it difficult to discover the common Father of all humanity. But the uniting bond of a church is the possession of a common faith. This does not mean agreement upon a creedal statement of that faith. Being endowed with differing minds and possessed by the inner compulsion to use them,

we should expect wide differences of opinions; but all should still be able to unite in the one Church of Christ. This fellowship must be as inclusive as Christ but it is likewise as exclusive as is he.

United in faith.—There is a unique community of interest shared by believers who have a bond of unity in their spiritual quest. That bond is a trust in an adventuring God who does not cradle his children in ease but is their Leader in the path of redemption; trust in Jesus Christ as the Revealer of the way of life which is life eternal; trust in the progressive leading of God's Spirit within us in the discovery of truth and the beauty of holiness; trust in our fellow men as sharers in a common hope, united by a common love, and inspired by a common motive of self-giving service. Those who have such overcoming faith and those sincere God seekers who are fighting the battle of life for it should feel a oneness like unto a seamless robe.

Making the Church a Fellowship

A divided body.—But it cannot be denied that the church often exhibits the worst manifestations of clannishness. Church quarrels are proverbial. Denominational jealousies thwart Christlike cooperation. Even within the communions the hammers of intolerance are driving great rifts that threaten to split them wide open. The church we know bears slight resemblance to a "community of saints" or "body of Christ." Its members seem often to have forgotten that "all ye are brethren" (Matt. 23. 8). There has been some ground for the charge that the church has become a "middle-class institution," a protector of economic privileges, and a social convention of the conservative element of our population.

A basis of good will.—A forward-looking American minister appropriately asks, "What if the most brotherly organization in town were not the Knights of Pythias or the Elks' Club or Mike Fogarty's Saloon but the Christian Church? What if the Christian Church should become a place where Tom, Dick, and Harry, together with their wives and children, could meet, not on the basis of an impossible equality that never has existed and never will

exist, but on the basis of a mutual sympathy and good will, which has not always existed but might exist?"[1]

A new spirit.—It must be admitted that differences in education and social advantages present genuine bars to fellowship within the church. Even this institution cannot wave aside racial differences as if they did not exist, though it can admit no contemptuous assumptions of superiority. Modern church edifices reveal a growing consciousness that the house of God should be a genuine community center. Men will find him not only in common worship but in common recreation. But fellowship is not primarily a matter of gymnasiums and social parlors, recreation rooms and dining halls and clubrooms. It is not something that can be installed in a building; it is a new spirit that must be instilled in the hearts of men. It comes from a living contact with the Jesus who shocked the respectable of his time by the breadth of his fellowships. He who knew no hatred for Samaritans nor ostracism for publicans nor contempt for those too poor to observe the meticulous regulations of the law can lead us into a fellowship which knows a "man's a man for a' that."

Our task.—A compelling task for each Christian is that of making his own church a finer fellowship of faith. Needlessly to duplicate other social activities is to fritter away the energies of Christians so that they have no time left for the unique task of the church. To ignore the cultivation of social ties means failure to achieve the brotherhood in which the consciousness of the fatherhood of God can most easily arise. The Christian strives for that kingdom which should be God's kingdom, which must be founded upon fellowship in faith.

A Reciprocal Ideal

More than service.—Service has been stressed in and out of season as the ideal for the Christian. It is difficult to avoid a certain condescension in doing something for another. Unity is promoted by "not what we give but what we share." Thoreau expressed the feelings of some others when he said, "If I knew for a certainty that a man

[1] E. F. Tittle.

was coming to my house with the conscious design of doing me good I should run for my life as from that dry and parching wind of the African deserts called the simoon, which fills the mouth and nose and ears and eyes with dust till you are suffocated, for fear I should get some of his good done to me, some of its virus mingled with my blood." Fellowship has a very different spirit. It would receive as well as give. It has the fullest respect for every individual. It believes that in reciprocation lies the fullest expression of the divine life.

Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ . . . that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing *I do*, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye are otherwise minded, this also shall God reveal unto you: only, whereunto we have attained, by that same *rule* let us walk. (Phil. 3. 7, 10-16.)

Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others?* do not even the Gentiles the same? Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matt. 5. 43-48.)

For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food. For every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But solid food is for full-grown men, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.

Wherefore leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us press on unto perfection, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the teaching of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit. For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and *then* fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. (Heb. 5. 12 to 6. 6.)

CHAPTER X

REACHING FORWARD

1. Do tests of biblical information give satisfactory evidence of one's spiritual progress?
2. If our goal is to "catch up with ourselves," is it any excuse that we are "no worse than others"?
3. Have you ever known a person who could lay claim to the title of being "too good"?
4. Do you think sanctification has lost its usefulness in our religious vocabulary?
5. What is the general teaching of the Bible on Christian perfection?
6. How does the figure of a pilgrimage fit our progress in Christian living?
7. To which sentiment do you subscribe and why: "Contentment is hell"; or "Godliness with contentment is great gain"?

JONATHAN once said unto David, "Is not the arrow beyond thee?" It always is; and the task of the Christian believer is to follow the arrow. The Greeks pictured Minerva as springing full-grown from the head of Zeus, but no Christian comes suddenly into full maturity. Hence, the will to improve is an essential constituent in the personal life of the sincere follower of Jesus. In his parable of the Pharisee and the publican the Master depicts the rejection of the man who has reached the spiritual deadline (Luke 18. 9-14). Though the publican undoubtedly was the less admirable man from other points of view, the enervating self-satisfaction of the Pharisee made his pious forms a loathsome abomination.

HOW OLD ART THOU?

Our spiritual age.—A recent development in educational circles is the testing of intelligence in order to determine the mental age of the child or adult. Enough progress has been made to reveal that everyone has several ages. The calendar records chronological age, but physiological age may be slightly different. Mental age varies even

more. The contention from the army statistics that the average mental age in America was about fourteen years has aroused widespread denial and controversy. But we are primarily interested in the spiritual age of a person. In many a prayer meeting has this been advertised. On a night in January thirty years ago, the witness testifies, he was born again into the kingdom of God, and for thirty years he has been a child of God. Such testimonies are interesting as accounts of the length of time a man has professed the Christian faith. They tell nothing, however, as to how far the individual has progressed in living according to that faith. Spiritual age is determined by daring in faith, insight in love, and growing knowledge of truth. One thing is almost as unfitting as the attempt to make an adult religious experience fit a child, and that is for a grown man or woman to continue in a childish, peevish faith. Many people have a desperate fear of growing old. One of the soundest New Year's resolutions for everyone, however, is the determination to make one whole year's development in "stretching forward to the things which are before" (Phil. 3. 13). For the complaint is even more appropriate to-day than in the first century concerning the number of church members who "when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God" (Heb. 5. 12).

Catching Up With Ourselves

The race of life.—Paul likens the Christian life unto a race (1 Cor. 9. 24); but he was well aware of the necessity for knowing the goal "lest by any means I should be running, or had run, in vain" (Gal. 2. 2). The object in most races is to defeat an opponent. In the Christian race it is to "catch up with ourselves." In most colleges the coveted letter is awarded on the ground that the individual has made the team and beat someone else for the position. In at least one college to my knowledge a person may win a race or make a team without winning his letter. Faithfulness in training and earnest endeavor to the extent of one's own ability determine the winning of the prize.

Our real competitor.—Competition has been called the life of trade. In circles that are in earnest about Christian social ideals cooperation rather than competition is emphasized. But competition has its place. Our goal should not be to beat the other man, for with the innate inequalities of ability that is rarely a fair test. Our aim should not be to "keep up with the Joneses" but to realize our own possibilities, no matter what those may be. Alice in Wonderland discovered that she had to run very fast even to keep in the same place. To catch up with ourselves demands the running of no mean race.

Fulfilling expectations.—Jesus illustrated this principle in the parable of the talents (Matt. 25. 14-30). The man who had had two thousand dollars with which to trade had done just as well as the man who had had five thousand dollars with which to speculate, even though the numerical gain was much less. The one-talent man was blamed not because he had not caught up with the five-talent man, but because he had failed even to attempt to catch up with himself. One of the fine things about the game of golf is that a man's true opponent is the score that he ought to make.

Can We Be Too Good?

Conspicuous virtues.—Most people crave some publicity, but we fear few young people to-day would be grateful for being advertised as wholly sanctified. They agree with John Dewey: "To be so good as to attract notice is to be priggish, too good for this world." In fact, so great is the fear of being considered too good that a common form of hypocrisy lies in the attempt to appear worse than we actually are.

Falsely advertised goods.—But if a person is too good, is that person good at all? It is easily possible for a person to be too sentimental, too bigoted, too fanatical, or too intolerant. Goodness has its hideous caricatures by moral prigs and spiritual snobs. We may hesitate to brand for what it is a misguided and warped conception of life's values; but we must never allow a musty sanctimoniousness to robe itself in the garments of supergoodness and thus damn the one thing needful. Negative taboos and

unwise restraints must not be permitted to masquerade as the quintessence of goodness, else sane common sense will revolt. "If this be goodness, O Lord, deliver me from an overdose of its poison."

The golden mean.—It may be that the misunderstanding arises from the so-called doctrine of the mean, which Aristotle, a famous Greek philosopher, made central in his ethical teaching. We may illustrate from the virtue of generosity. On the one hand a man can be too stingy; on the other hand excessive generosity may lead to improvidence, which is no more a virtue than parsimoniousness. True goodness lies in neither extreme but in the mean. Some people seem to think that their conduct should be a happy medium between the bad and the good. But the will of God is not that we should take up our abode in some convenient halfway house between virtue and vice; rather, the good is the mean between its various aberrations and is the harmony of perfect love to God and man.

On the mountain.—When, then, the Christian follows the arrow that guides him in the race of his life he need have no fear that it can lead him to an excess of virtue. Like Jesus he will find that the mountain tops of virtue are even more fascinating and interesting than the valleys.

The Pursuit of Perfection

Sanctification unpopular.—"Entire sanctification," "holiness," "Christian perfection," are words that have fallen into ill repute in many circles to-day. Calvinistic churches hasten to affirm that the expressions are children of another doctrine than theirs. Even followers of John Wesley are prone to apologize for any emphasis along these lines. It must be remembered that Wesley never professed entire sanctification for himself. He preached it because he found it in Scripture. What is, then, the testimony of the Bible?

The biblical ideal.—Jesus said, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5. 48). The Authorized Version gives this as a command, but in the promise rests likewise an exhortation to fulfill the promise. Certainly this is no modest goal for a Christian.

But at the same time Jesus taught his disciples to pray, saying, "Forgive us our trespasses." This might indicate that the former promise is not to be fulfilled, but to the end we must pray for the forgiveness of sins. The beloved disciple wrote, "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God" (1 John 3. 9). It would appear clear that the true child of God has no part in sin. But in the very same document we read, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1. 8). We must confess that this conforms more nearly to the human experience we know than the other assertion. The same contradiction is to be found in Paul. He writes, "Let us therefore, as many as are perfect. . . ." He not only claims it for himself but speaks of perfection as something in which a good many others share. But he writes in almost the same breath, "Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but . . . I press on toward the goal, unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3. 13-15). He distinctly repudiates any final attainment but dedicates himself to the pursuit of the highest ideals that have come to him through Christ.

A never-ending process.—This warfare of proof texts is best resolved in the insight that holiness is nothing to be professed but is something to be pursued. Perfection is not a sudden attainment, after which we can be at ease in Zion. It is misleading to sing, "'Tis done—the great transaction's done." Conversion is tremendously important; but unless it sets our feet in the pursuit of perfection, the new life in Christ will be still-born. Man may not be saved *by* character, but unless he is saved *to* character he is saved to nothing worth while. "The second blessing" has been a phrase often used to describe a further work of grace in the human heart. Some people to-day are dubious about it. We should rather doubt the genuineness of a Christian experience of a follower of Jesus who had had no second blessing. Where men have erred has been in setting a maximum number. If there have not been third and fourth blessings, there has been no very zealous pursuit of perfection.

Dangerous profession.—It is the profession rather than the pursuit of perfection which evokes criticism. The man who professes entire sanctification denies the fact in his own profession. If he had attained any great degree of Christian perfection he would be above such spiritual pride as to publish it abroad in his egotism. One who could have made the most exalted claims nevertheless affirmed, "Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled" (Luke 14. 11). Holiness is one of the things that will not stand advertising. "Let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works" (Matt. 5. 16), but it is not necessary continually to call their attention to the surpassing quality of the lantern. When they have looked upon some of the poor imitations of holiness which have been advertised, men have been tempted to go to the other extreme and say that all is mere imitation and humbug. That is not true. There is no baser cynicism than the supposition that the good will of others is always hypocrisy. But loud professions of holiness never advance the kingdom of God. Ours should be the steady pursuit of high ideals under the leadership of the God who has implanted them within us, and without whom it would be impossible for us to attain unto "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4. 13).

Pilgrim's Progress Up to Date

Our pilgrimage.—The Protestant classic of personal Christian experience has been Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*—a fascinating allegory depicting the pilgrimage of Christian from the City of Destruction to Mount Zion, the Celestial City. It appears unpardonably selfish to us that he should be willing to leave his wife and children even supposedly to save his own soul; but there is at bottom the allegorical expression of the truth that no one can redeem the life of another. No man can reach forward in the place of anyone else. Three hundred years have not altered the obstacles to spiritual advance. The Slough of Despond and the Valley of Humiliation are still to be found. Such companions as Formalist, Lust of the Flesh, Pride, Envy, and Money Love still crowd the pathway of life. We are still likely to fall into the hands

of the Giant Despair in Doubting Castle, and the Delectable Mountains have not lost their delusive charm. Yet the Christian life for us is not best understood as a pilgrimage to a heavenly city.

The ever-seeking God.—The note Bunyan missed was that of the seeking God who is ever knocking even at the gate of the City of Destruction. His prophet proclaims, "Make ye ready the way of the Lord" (Matt. 3. 3). We do not so much reach forward after another city that has foundations but we seek to prepare securer foundations, not only for our own lives, but in the world about us. We should strive to clear away all obstacles to an open highway over which God can come. Few Christians can conscientiously sing, "I am a stranger here within a foreign land." Temporary abode though it may be, this world is our home; but a righteous God must feel a stranger in many parts, and he is certainly a stranger to many of his children.

Christian exploration.—Abraham is typical of the pilgrim. The one who reaches forward does not always know exactly whither he goes. He is exploring a land that has been for him as yet uninhabited. The explorers of the North Pole region do not find more favorable dwelling places for humanity. But the modern Christian pilgrim is seeking to find within his own city, through the warmth of love enkindled by Christ, a better home than he has ever known.

Mature Christian Experience

More than an emotion.—It is quite customary to speak of one's "Christian experience." It is too narrow an interpretation to think of this as a peculiar kind of emotional response that may accompany intense religious moments. The entire twenty-four hours of the day are filled with experiences. A "Christian experience" would therefore mean twenty-four hours of living that could be labeled Christian. It would include definite time for prayer and Bible study and meditation but it would likewise include every hour of work and play. Let one only stop and consider how many experiences become his during a single day that cannot by any stretch of the imagination be

labeled Christian! Such an aspiration would lead us to despair if we did not remember with Browning, "Not failure, but low aim is crime."

Divine discontent.—Contentment has often been preached as a Christian virtue. We certainly cannot depend on the satisfaction of our desires for the attainment of happiness. The person who is satisfied with his spiritual maturity is already dead unto Christ with no hope of resurrection. Discontent has been truly called divine, for without it we shall never reach forward to that which is beyond. Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven belonged to the poor in spirit. It was not their poverty which entitled them to such riches, but their consciousness of lack gave them the incentive to go forward. One of the most hopeful signs in the Christian churches to-day is a profounder realization of the unchristian aspects of our so-called Christian nations and the distance that exists between the life of the average person who professes belief in Christ and the life Jesus would have men lead. This ought not to be a ground for pessimism but a reason for optimism in that it reveals a wider realization of the goal to which we should attain. Discontent with the commercialism of our cities is the first step in spiritual advance. Dissatisfaction with his limited horizon has been the incentive to many a young man to work his way through college. God calls us unto the heights by a revelation of its distance from the plane we have hitherto taken for granted.

Who is a Christian?—Bjornsen's *Beyond Our Power* is the attempt of a modern dramatist to catch the spirit of the power in the life of Jesus. The dramatist answers through the mouth of the hero the question as to whom should be called a Christian. "Him alone who from Jesus has learned the secret of perfection and who is striving after it in *everything*."[1] He, then, who aspires to bear that name will ever strive valiantly to scale the heights of character which are the foothills of Mount Zion. The passion for perfection must be his. His destiny is sonship unto God. Therefore,

[1] Page 135; Charles Scribner's Sons; used by permission.

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!"[1]

[1] The Nautilus, Oliver Wendell Holmes.

For *it is* as *when* a man, going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability; and he went on his journey. Straightway he that received the five talents went and traded with them, and made other five talents. In like manner he also that *received* the two gained other two. But he that received the one went away and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. Now after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them. And he that received the five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: lo, I have gained other five talents. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. . . . And he also that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter; and I was afraid, and went away and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, thou hast thine own. But his lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I did not scatter; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest. Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath the ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away. (Matt. 25. 14-21, 24-29.)

And now, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: moreover I have seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be the token unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. (Exod. 3. 9-12.)

CHAPTER XI

FINDING ONESELF

1. What agencies are best fitted to give vocational guidance to the young people in your community? Has the church any responsibility here?
2. Why is individuality more marked in the country than it usually is in the city?
3. Is the instinct of imitation more helpful than it is detrimental?
4. How are we to choose between two rôles, either of which we might play in life?
5. What illustrations of the power of self-respect can you give from your own experience?
6. How does God "call" people to-day? Do you think that he ever "called" them differently?
7. What men and women in your town are worth the most?

THE search for the fountain of eternal youth once engaged the attention of those who longed for the most complete life. Mankind has followed countless quests, but none can compare with the attempt to find oneself. Few figures of speech are more aptly phrased. Selfhood is nothing given at birth, but full personality is a constant conquest which we must undertake. There are innate capacities within us. If a person is born without musical talent, the most industrious search will not discover it. But the greatest genius must find the possibilities within himself.

THE WORLD'S GREATEST UNDISCOVERED RESOURCES

Treasure seekers.—Undiscovered deposits of minerals, oils, and precious stones are eagerly sought in the less known parts of the globe by treasure seekers. Scientists seek accurately to survey the resources man has at his command in order that they may be conserved for future use. But within ourselves are unreckoned powers which await our discovery. They present the world's greatest potential resources. Most of us are and remain fractional personalities. Our whole self never comes to realization.

Self-development.—Self-development has sometimes been

deprecated as other than a Christian ideal. Men like Goethe who made this their goal in life are not usually held up as models for our emulation. It may find expression in a ruthless selfishness that is far from the self-sacrificing spirit of Jesus, but his objective for us should never be lost sight of: "I came that they may have life, and may have *it* abundantly."

The great discoverer.—It is fascinating to read the Gospels with this idea in mind. It is surprising how many Jesus helped to find themselves. In fact, could any man be "saved unto the uttermost" where that did not take place? A fisherman like Andrew did more than find his brother, Simon Peter, under the stimulus of Jesus: he found likewise capacities within himself which had never come to light while mending nets and casting lines. A taxgatherer like Matthew found more in Jesus than a more compelling superior officer: he found tribute within himself which he could offer to God and humanity. A scarlet woman like Mary Magdalene found more even than forgiveness of sin: she found capacities for love and devotion of which she probably had not dreamed. To-day a religious conversion ought to help every young man or woman to find those truest elements which may have hitherto lain dormant and submerged, and place them at the center of his life.

The Preservation of Individuality

Imitators of the mob.—To find oneself means exactly that and no one else. Some people make a vain endeavor to find some other person than themselves. It is a truism that no two leaves are ever exactly alike. Above all else, no two human beings were ever created the same. Though we were created dissimilar we often try desperately to appear alike. It is not a serious loss of personality that we follow conventions and fashions in little things like clothes. Imitation is one of the instincts with which we have been endowed. Real peril to individuality lies in following fashions in ideas and conventions in ideals. A host of young people would be afraid to try and be themselves. They keep their ear to the ground to know what is being thought and said and then "follow suit." As we

are afraid to stand on our own feet we practice the protective coloring of looking like our background. Edward Everett Hale wrote a humorous story entitled "My Double and How He Undid Me." Among the four speeches the Irish double of the noted minister was taught was the formula "I agree in general with the gentleman on the other side of the house." It was not necessary that he know what that was. It was sufficient that the double hide his personality in the group. There are many who "agree with the gentleman on the other side of the house" if only that it is the popular sentiment of the hour.

A danger in imitation.—One of the unfortunate accompaniments of strong personalities is the endeavor of their admirers to become like this ideal. The result is that they are pale imitations of the hero rather than themselves. An original work of art, even though it be no masterpiece, is more valuable than a copy of a world-famous picture. It is much easier to imitate the eccentricities and weaknesses of the strong than their elements of power. The world wants you and all of you. The true hero does not stimulate imitation of himself but gives us the incentive to go out and make the most of ourselves as he has done of himself.

A creative ideal.—"The imitation of Christ" has often been presented as the Christian ideal. It is rarely taken literally, for of course it is impossible to relive any life when the conditions that surrounded the original have become so materially altered; but there is a sense in which it is a false ideal. The world does not need pale imitations of Christ or washed-out copies of his matchless personality. It needs all the power God has given unto you, baptized with the spirit of Christ. It is thought-provoking sometimes to ask ourselves what would Jesus do, but we cannot escape the fact that duty is personal. "What must *I* do?" is untransferable and nonborrowable. The world needs the inspiration of Christ more than a mere imitation of his single acts.

Playing Our Highest Rôle

A dramatic figure of speech.—A figure of speech may be taken over from the drama relative to this thought of

cultivating a self of which we may be proud. The task of an actor is never one of mere imitation; it is his business to create the character from the material the dramatist has given him. His success as an actor depends on the use he makes of the materials at his command. God has endowed each one of us with the raw materials of our part in life. It depends on us to create from these the highest possible rôle—a self to be proud of. It often happens that the best acting is done by someone else than the player who has the leading part. And so in life many fail to realize the possibilities that are within them. They conceive it ignobly or give slight heed thereto.

Finding God's plan.—It is frequently contended that God has a plan for every life. We believe this is the case. But to live that life requires more than the mechanical routine of following a prescribed course. This plan must be discovered in life's school of trial and error. There is abundant sway for all the creative capacities we can bring to bear.

A solemn trust.—A little girl once surprised her mother with the inquiry as to what she thought about when she held her daughter as a baby in arms. She replied to the best of her ability and then asked the reason for this curiosity. The girl rejoined that she was playing Mary and the Christ Child with her doll, and she wanted to do it as well as possible and thought that this information might assist her. To desire to realize the most from our lives may be indicative of the solemn trust we hold therein.

No borrowed conceit.—We should not be ashamed of the desire to make a name for ourselves. Too many people are content with "borrowed conceit." A man admitted rather apologetically, "I was fifteen years old before I knew I was better than a nigger." He evidently supposed that greatness could be thrust upon him in some mechanical fashion, and that he could shine in the reflected glory of a race. No one else can make our name respected; we must do that by finding our highest rôle and playing it to the best of our ability.

Redemptive Self-Respect

Maintaining our honor.—"For the honor of the school"

is one of the most compelling motivations young people recognize. Our own honor should make no less appeal to the latent heroism within us. We should be loyal to the royal in ourselves. Fear affords a less effective appeal than in former days, but self-respect ought to form even a firmer foundation upon which to build character. We doubt if it was fear that kept young Joseph from becoming a tool of the passions of Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39, 8ff.); he held too high an opinion of himself to be dragged through the mire. When Nehemiah was urged by well-meaning friends to take refuge in the Temple for fear of the enemies who sought to stop the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, he replied, "And who is there, that, being such as I, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go" (Neh. 6. 11). When our finer self is in danger of being submerged in the hour of temptation, when all the restraining brakes have been removed, we need such a self-respect as will scorn stooping to a level so far below our rightful rôle in life.

Our better selves.—In Jerome's *The Passing of the Third Floor Back* there is an eloquent statement of the power of our better selves to call us back to higher things. The Stranger tells the conscienceless fortune hunter who it is that will dissuade her from turning her back upon love for the owner of a greasy bank roll: "Your Better Self. There are those whose Better Self lies slain by their own hand and troubles them no more. But yours, my child, you have let grow too strong. It will ever be your master. . . . Flee from it, and it will follow you. You cannot escape it. Insult it, and it will chastise you with burning shame, with stinging reproach from day to day."[1]

One aspect of redemption.—Of course, no one is ever redeemed by his own self-respect any more than by his own attainments in character. Redemption is never without its divine aspects; but the man who has found a genuinely high estimation of himself is well on the way to being redeemed. The religious soul that knows, "Now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be" (1 John 3. 2) has come into a realization that

[1] *The Passing of the Third Floor Back*, by Jerome K. Jerome; Dodd, Mead & Co., publishers; copyright by Dodd, Mead & Co., Inc.

should keep him from stooping to the level upon which otherwise he would be content to rest.

Making the Most of What We Are

The parable of the talents.—Preoccupation with striving toward the heights should not blind us to our limitations. The Lord must have loved the one-talent man because he made so many of them. We should remember, however, that there are those who have many talents who make little of them and those with few talents who make much of these meager personal resources. It is overlooked in many expositions of Jesus' parable of the talents that the word "talent" stands for a denomination of money rather than a special form of ability (Matt. 25. 14-30). We have no basis for knowing that the so-called five-talent man had, as a matter of fact, any other talent than that of money-making. The one-talent man might have been a poet rather than a business man and therefore timid about embarking upon speculative enterprises. He did not have any talent to speak of for money-making. The question we would like to know, however, is whether he cultivated what talent he did possess while the money lay wrapped in a napkin. If so, he might have deserved commendation just as much as the man who did the most with his financial ability.

Our rightful place.—Some have a genius for music; some have speaking ability; others have a capacity for friendship; some take most readily to salesmanship; others have inventive capacity but no ability to meet others. We cannot be really other than what we are; our condemnation lies in the failure to make the most of what we are. It is pitiable to behold misspent energies—people struggling vainly with a task for which they are not fitted, while their real capacities lie dormant. It has been estimated that one half of us are square pegs in round holes, trying to fit where we do not belong. To find ourselves means to make the most of those special talents we possess.

The Divine Aspect

All are called.—Every human endeavor has its divine aspect. Grace is only the reverse side of the shield of

human repentance. Finding oneself has its divine counterpart and accompaniment in God's call to us. The day has fortunately passed when a few specific tasks drawing financial compensation from the Christian Church could claim a monopoly of divine significance. There are not sacred callings as opposed to secular tasks, but there are various ways in which an individual may enter any life-work meeting a legitimate need of men. Beyond those who are merely wasting their lives is that vast number who are selling themselves to the highest bidder. The worst form of wage slavery is that of the person who is a slave to the man paying the most money without regard to whether the talents of the wage-earner are fully employed, or needs of humanity served. Jesus taught that life is a stewardship, which we hold as a sacred trust. His followers disdain to sell their lives and ask, rather, where they can invest them in such a way as to bring in the highest returns. Financial gain can never be ignored, for economic parasites are not paragons of Christian virtue. A high salary, however, is poor compensation for losing the self we ought to find, and the world should not be able to contain money enough to persuade us to do that which is socially harmful. A divine call is manifest not in what we do but in how we do it. There are secular ministers and sacred bankers. No person is excused from listening for his call.

How God calls.—Among the outstanding calls recorded in the Bible are those of Moses (Exod. 3 and 4), Isaiah (6. 1-8), and Jeremiah (1. 1-10). Of course, every such experience is distinctive and personal. The realization of God's will for our lives comes to each in his own way. His leading is manifest in apparently trivial and secular ways. There are two common factors in the three, however. These are a recognition of their particular personal qualifications and a realization of great social tasks. It is noteworthy that all three of these spiritual giants were most impressed with their inadequacies for the task that seemed to open before them. Their developed personalities were drawn out by the stimulus of mighty undertakings. God was not only calling them to a task for which they were fitted but calling them to a larger life to fit the

task that needed to be done. We cannot find ourselves aright without finding God's call to some niche which we can fill. Religion thus brings to even the most prosaic drudgery the glow of an eternal significance.

How Much Are You Worth?

A true rating.—Too many people confuse this question with the other: "How much do you get?" People do not necessarily get what they are worth. Some people very obviously get more than they are worth simply because they are in a position to demand it; others just as certainly get less than they are worth to the community. Bradstreet's rating gives only indications as to what a man gets. No income-tax returns would help us to compute what Luther was worth to the development of Western civilization nor what John Wesley was worth to the democracy of England. What a man is worth to the community does not necessarily bear much relation to what the community pays him. To get for oneself is the acquisitive ideal of worldliness; to be worth all we can is to find the self that lies dormant within us.

Evaluating personality.—Jesus once exclaimed, "How much then is a man of more value than a sheep!" (Matt. 12. 12.) A learned professor calculated a few years ago that the value of an American was $4,720. It would seem then that one would need only to consult the market quotations on sheep in order to answer the query of Jesus. Sometimes men and women are thus treated as commodities, valued according to the law of supply and demand and the economic product which they furnish society. Emerson complained against such standards when he affirmed that you could get more on the market place of Concord for a quart of milk than for a quart of blood. Christianity opposes all exclusively economic evaluations with the standard of the family, wherein love finds in a loving personality an infinite value that figures are powerless to compute. No man has truly "found himself" until he has found that estimate of himself and his fellows which the Hebrew author expressed in the words "God created man in his own image" (Gen. 1. 27). But the worth of a Christian is not an "imputed" worth, any more than his

righteousness can be an "imputed" righteousness. Paul said, in commending the runaway slave Onesimus, "Who once was unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable to thee and to me" (Philemon 11). Onesimus had found a new worth in himself when he discovered that he was a child who could think God's thoughts after him. And so with everyone who has found redemption in Jesus Christ.

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that *life* which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, *the faith* which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me. (Gal. 2. 20.)

Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with *him* in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in the bondage of sin; for he that hath died is justified from sin. But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over him. (Rom. 6. 3-9.)

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit. Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing. (John 15. 1-5.)

CHAPTER XII

"CHRIST IN ME"

1. What religious phrases have lost meaningful significance for you?
2. What personalities have most truly "entered into" you?
3. Which means the most to you and why—the indwelling of God or of Christ?
4. Does mysticism seem entirely foreign to you?
5. How is moral vigor strengthened by mystical contemplation?
6. Can we distinguish between what God does within us and what we do?
7. What does Holy Communion mean to you?

Our closing study is to be dedicated to the Pauline phrase "Christ in me." Its strangeness to many Christians well illustrates the fact that words can become one of the greatest foes of ideas. When abiding truths become identified with the antiquated vocabulary with which they have first been expressed, not only do they lose their appeal, but in their strangeness we are led to discount the verity expressed.

A Prescientific Mode of Thinking

Demon possession.—One of the phenomena reported in the Bible which is furthest from our mode of thinking is that of demon possession. Unclean spirits were thought to take possession of the body of an individual and cause disease and sin. They were conceived in such a way as to be able to pass into swine. A particularly violent person was believed to be possessed by seven devils. The opponents of Jesus interpreted his power over these spirits as evidence that he himself had Beelzebub, the prince of demons. Modern interpreters do not doubt the presence of such mental phenomena, for they are to be found today, and unscientifically trained people under the influence of the Bible again ascribe it to satanic possession. Though the interpretation be rejected as inaccurate, the

fact of the torn personalities remains, and likewise the power Jesus possessed to restore peace of mind to these individuals.

The indwelling Christ.—It is against the background of a universal belief in demon possession as the explanation of demonic character that we must approach Paul's conception of the indwelling Christ: "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1. 27). He writes to the Galatians, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2. 20). His prayer for his converts is "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Eph. 3. 17). He would have them possessed by Christ, and not by demons. He can say, "For me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1. 21). The indwelling Christ is the explanation of the new life of the Christian. "If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin. . . . If any man is in Christ, *he is* a new creature" (Rom. 8. 10; 2 Cor. 5. 17). "In Christ" is simply a verbal variation of "Christ in me." In Paul's letters that prepositional phrase recurs 164 times. It is the spiritual presence of the risen Redeemer, for "the Lord is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3. 17). That presence was the vibrating energy of his life. From it he could never escape. Wherever one walks on board a ship he cannot escape from the vibration of the engines; for he is in the ship, and the ship in him. So Paul could not escape from the pulsating presence of Christ.

The Haunted House

More than a myth.—The first temptation of sober minds is to brush aside this exuberant language and class it with such outgrown myths as the wandering of the soul through the universe. Why should we think that Christ dwells in us any more than demons? But the *fact* is not so easily disposed of. There are other personalities that have taken up their abode within us. A brilliant modern preacher has referred to the mind of man as a "haunted house."[1] Both night and day there come creaking up from the cellars of our houses the departed ghosts that will not leave.

Ghosts within us.—There is the ghost of the animal

[1] *The Haunted House*, by H. E. Luccock; The Abingdon Press.

that still lives in us. From the standpoint of time life has reached human levels only a short time, and it is not strange that often the animal within us walks naked and unabashed. Many of our most fundamental instincts are shared with the animal world. After the animal came the savage, and he is still with us. Such vestiges as the vermiform appendix often cause much trouble, but they cannot compare with the savage survivals. There is the child, which likewise rises up within us as a ghost. No one will deny that we were all once children, and many have never driven childishness out of the house of maturity.

Others dwell in us.—There are others who likewise dwell in us. Our parents dwell in us in more than a physical sense. We cannot escape the influences they poured into our lives when these were assuming form and mold. There are few of us who cannot name at least half a dozen men and women who have touched our lives at critical moments, so that it is no exaggeration to say that they dwell in us. It is against the background of these conceptions that we need to look again at Paul's thought of "Christ in me." The animal is in me, the savage is in me, the child is in me, there are more helpful influences likewise in me; but does Christ dwell in my heart by faith? Does he also abide in me?

Distinctions in God

Trinity not distinctive.—This question suggests some of the Trinitarian speculations of Christian theologians. It is furthest from our purpose to enter into these. The distinctive element in the Christian conception of God is not the mystery as to how he may be three and at the same time one. It is the character of the God and Father of Jesus Christ which is important, and not mathematical subtleties.

Jesus of history.—Paul did not affirm that the Man Jesus, who was raised in Nazareth and practiced the trade of carpentry, who was tempted, suffered, and had limitations of knowledge, dwelt in us. It was the heavenly Christ, the firstborn of creation, who dwelt in us. It was that which was divine of Christ which should likewise be

in us. When the theologians sought to frame their Trinitarian dogmas they were forced to draw a distinction between the divine and the human in Jesus. An exact equation could not be drawn between the eternal Son of God and the helpless Babe that Mary held to her breast.

The God who is near.—Trinitarian speculation is unpopular to-day because it attempts to enter a realm where we have not the mental tools to work. There may be some whose spiritual perceptions are so keen that they can distinguish in experience between the presence of God, the abiding Holy Spirit, and the indwelling of the risen, glorified Christ; but the author, at least, has never met any who could convey this differentiation to him clearly. We can make a distinction in words, but that does not make a distinction in fact. Jesus himself undoubtedly affirmed with every Jew of his time, "Jehovah our God is one Jehovah" (Deut. 6. 4). It is this God whom we know in Christ who is near and in whom "we live, and move, and have our being." The fact of experience has been expressed in the lines of Frederick Hosmer:

"Go not, my soul, in search of Him:
Thou wilt not find him there
Or in the depths of shadow dim
Or heights of upper air.

"For not in far-off realms of space
The Spirit hath its throne;
In every heart it findeth place
And waiteth to be known.

"Thought answereth alone to thought,
And soul with soul hath kin;
For outward God he findeth not,
Who finds not God within."

The Christ of experience.—Ancients spoke of the Logos, the divine Reason, pervading the universe. Religion is on such a personal plane, however, that impersonal terms do not adequately convey the warmth of its emotional quality. He who knows God in Christ will interpret "the divine within" in terms of this historical revelation. In meditation upon the all-pervasive spirit of the universe with which we would be more closely identified it is not unnatural to come to the rapture of Bernard of Clairvaux:

"Jesus, thou Joy of loving hearts!
Thou Fount of life! thou Light of men!
From the best bliss that earth imparts
We turn unfilled to thee again.

"O Jesus, ever with us stay;
Make all our moments calm and bright,
Chase the dark night of sin away,
Shed o'er the world thy holy light."

The Nature of Mysticism

Abnormal expressions.—The modern world is experiencing a revival of mysticism. This is not to say that the extravagant ecstasies of the medieval mystics are being cultivated to-day; on the contrary, we more often find revulsion from the elaborate mechanism of the mystic way. The purgation by fasting and vigils from all earthly thoughts and desires seems to us unnatural. Psychologists are very critical of the claims that in meditative trances the soul experiences union with God. We are not tempted to follow in the footsteps of Saint Theresa, the famous Spanish mystic, who reported: "In the orison of union the soul is fully awake as regards God but wholly asleep as regards things of this world and in respect of herself. During the short time the union lasts she is as it were deprived of every feeling, and even if she would she could not think of any single thing."

Finding God within.—The mystical experience we value to-day is not a union of the soul with God but it is "tapping interior reservoirs of spiritual energy . . . which brings first-hand conviction that God is near at hand and directly operating."[2] It finds God within us. It is a reaction against mere scientific analysis and affirms that there are verities that elude this approach to reality. Mysticism sees the invisible in the world round about us and in the world within. It trusts the eye of the soul as well as the eye of the body in faith that there is a kinship between God and man. It affirms immediate contact with the beyond within. Thoas, in Goethe's *Iphigenie,* objects, "This is no god; 'tis thine own heart which speaks." But Iphigenie

[2] Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Company from *Fundamental Ends of Life,* by Rufus M. Jones.

truly replies, "The gods speak to us only through our hearts."

The working Christ.—Christ mysticism finds inspiration in an ever-present Redeemer. It makes little of "the work of Christ" at some time in the historical past. This would matter little if "the working Christ" were not active in the human soul. Hence, it is possible to affirm:

> **"No distant Lord have I,**
> **Loving afar to be.**
> **Made flesh for me, he cannot rest**
> **Until he rests in me."**

A Moral Experience

Abiding in the vine.—Mysticism is discounted most frequently because of its supposed indifference to ethical values. This may be true of some historical manifestations, but it is not the case with the experiences reported in the Bible. The man who is "in Christ" has become thereby a new creation and must put away the old life of sin. The Pauline figures of "Christ in me" and "I in Christ" have their counterpart in the Gospel of John in the allegory of the vine and the branches. Is the branch in the vine or the vine in the branch? No one would presume to say, for they are so indissolubly united that the life-giving energies may flow through the whole and bear fruit. Since we are likened unto the branches, the surety that we are actually abiding in the vine lies in the ethical fruit we bear. It is by their fruits ye shall know them; but it is likewise by their roots we shall grow them. Hence, we must give heed that we are rooted and grounded "in Christ" if we are to bear his fruit.

The fruit of the Spirit.—It was John Ruskin who said, "If the ghost that is in you leaves your tongue the tongue of a liar, your hand the hand of a juggler, and your heart the heart of a cheat, then be assured it is no holy ghost." Christ is not in me when I am doing the works of the devil. I cannot go out and expect men to believe that I have his indwelling presence if I exhibit the fruit of the animal, the savage, or the child mind. I must reveal the fruit of the Spirit, which is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kind-

ness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control" (Gal. 5. 22, 23). The reverse must likewise contain truth—that the power to do God's will is in itself a sign of the presence of God in our lives. "Christ in me" is the person plus the living, acting God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Died and risen with Christ.—If a man is "in Christ," it is necessary that he repeat all the great experiences of Christ. Paul works out this mystical identification in connection with the death and resurrection of his Lord. As the believer went down into the stream in baptism he died unto sin: so likewise in coming out he should rise unto newness of life as Christ had risen from the dead (Rom. 6. 4-11). This was not a magical formula unto Paul but should symbolize the real transformation in the life of the man who had come to be "in Christ." Particularly was it necessary for the believer to share in the sufferings of Christ if he should expect to reign with him. The essence of this mystical language is that if "ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3. 3), that life must reveal the moral quality of him who has taken up his abode in us. If the experience is genuine, I must "fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh" (Col. 1. 24).

Empowerment.—As has been frequently stressed, we must note again that this moral task that is ours is only the counterpart of a divine gift. Spiritual power must come for such an identification with Christ. Religion should bring not so much an experience of enjoyment as of empowerment. The contrast has sometimes been drawn between Christianity and Confucianism—that the former affords not only higher ideals but the power to realize them. Anyone conscious of the shortcomings of Christian people and Christian nations will be hesitant to press such a claim. Nevertheless, the weed-covered courtyards of many Confucian temples suggest a religion from which God has departed, leaving no dynamic for the realization of ideals. A living God who dwells within us is the ground for Christian confidence. "We are a temple of the living God" (2 Cor. 6. 16). We see not yet all things subject unto him but we see Jesus and through him find the

working God within us. 'Tis then we pray in the words of Tennyson:

"Oh living will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow through our deeds and make them pure."

The Real Presence

Finding Christ.—Theologians have debated concerning the "real presence of Christ" in the Eucharist, or Lord's Supper. Literalism would exclude it from our thought, but poetic imagination finds here a ladder for the spirit. A reputed logion of Jesus, recently discovered in Egypt, says, "Raise the stone, and thou shalt find me; cleave the wood, and there am I." Most of us find difficulty, however, in finding the presence of Christ beneath the stone and in the wood. It is in the memorial meal that his nearness is most perceptible. As we partake of the sacramental bread and wine, the symbolic representations of his Passion, they literally become "in us." That, of course, has no magic avail if at the same time Christ does not dwell in our hearts by faith; but it is suggestive of the real presence of "Christ in me."

Transforming the elements.—Richard Wagner used one form of the legend of the Holy Grail in his opera "Parsifal." Before the hero lifts the grail to the gaze of the adoring knights he speaks these words:

"By the power of love in sympathy,
The Lord of the Grail at his last meal
Transformed the wine and bread he took
Into the blood he shed for us,
Into the body which he brake."

Such is the mysterious transformation of physical nutriment into spiritual power. He who rises from the Communion table should go out transformed by the renewing power of Christlike love in sympathy that men will find Christ in him just as truly as these physical elements have become a part of his life.

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